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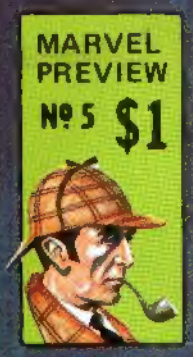


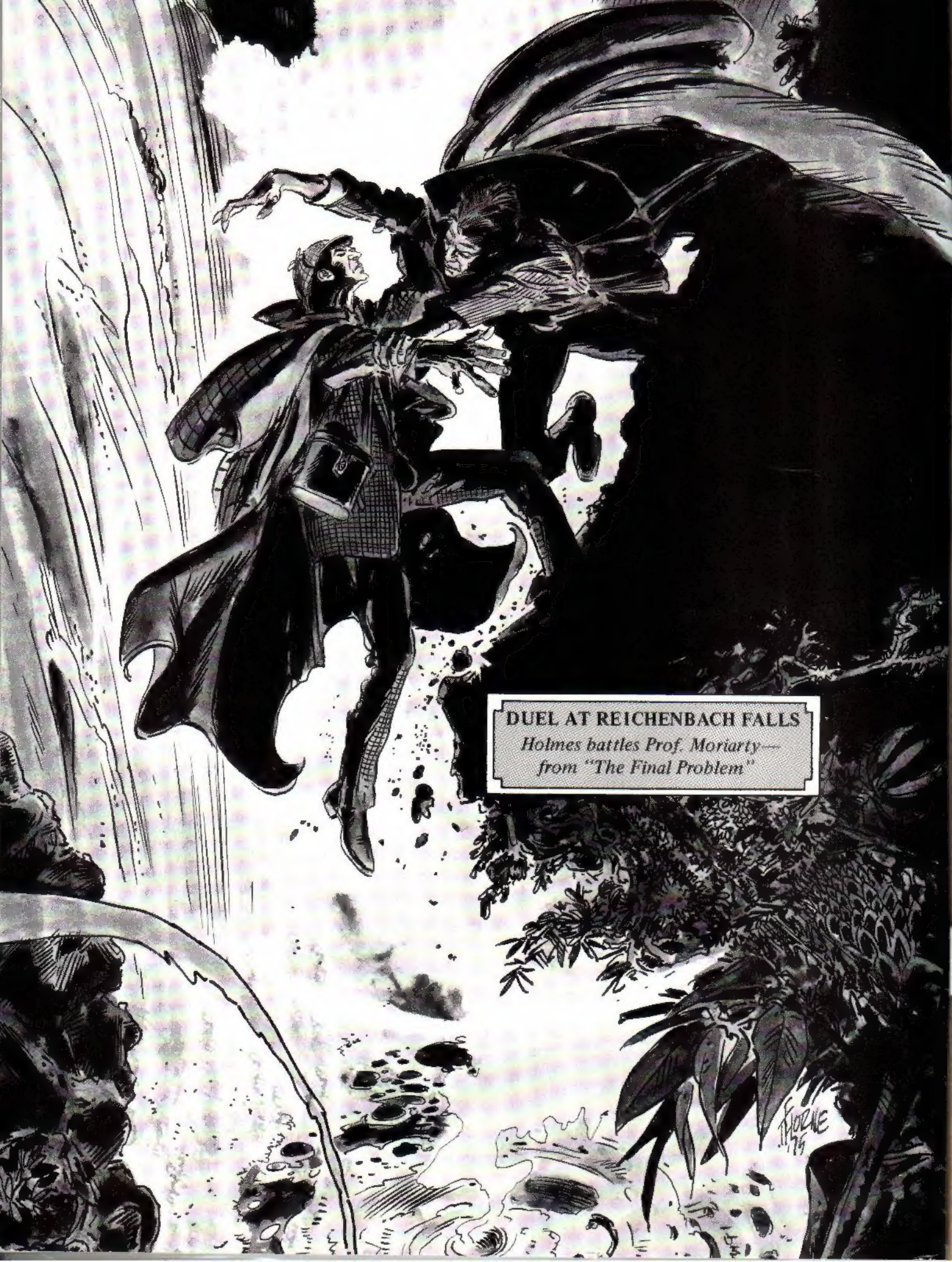
MARVEL PREVIEW PRESENTS

SHERLOCK HOLMES™

THIS ISSUE:
THE HOUND OF HELL!"

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S INCREDIBLE MYSTERY-ADVENTURE HERO

Mr. Retailer for display announcement, see page 65


DUEL AT REICHENBACH FALLS
Holmes battles Prof. Moriarty—
from "The Final Problem"

STAN LEE presents

MARVEL PREVIEW

FEATURING

SHERLOCK HOLMES

Volume I; Number 5—1976

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Ye editor sleuths around behind the scenes to provide background on the maddening mystery of the cryptic contents herein!
By ARCHIE GOODWIN

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THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES! 6
The old, dark, weather-worn mansion sprawled, veiled in mists, at the edge of the moors. There were tales of these moors, and of the mansion too. Tales of a monstrous beast, like a creature from the pits of Hell, that was the legacy of the Baskervilles. England's greatest detective must solve the ghastly puzzle—is someone exploiting the Baskerville curse or has the demon-hound returned to take its toll?
By DOUG MOENCH & VAL MAYERIK

MARVEL REVIEW 65
Letters and comments on our fabulous STARLORD feature.

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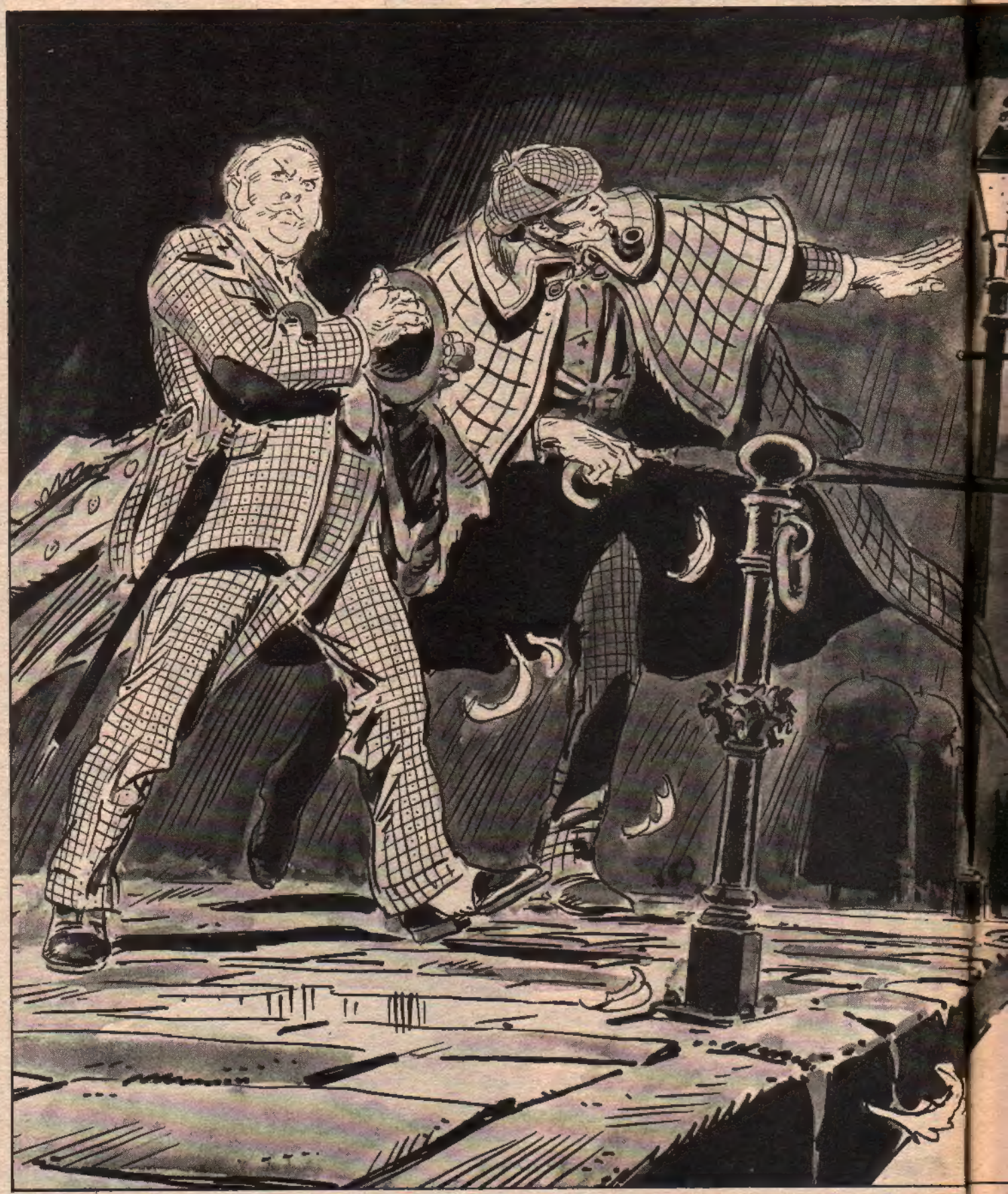
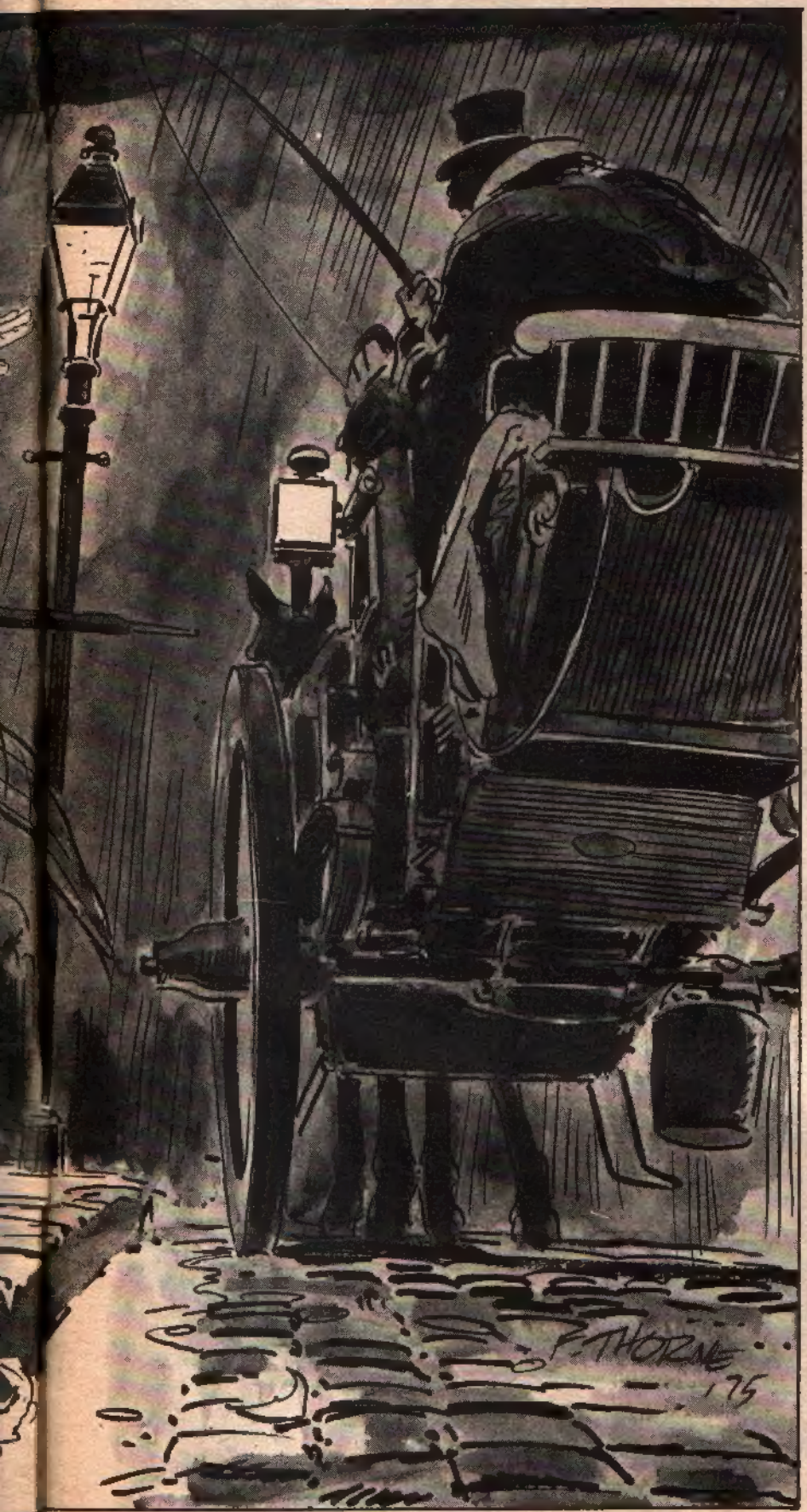
"THE GAME

EDITORIAL/ARCHIE GOODWIN



IS AFOOT!"



For a man who was in his prime in the Victorian Era of 1895, Mr. Sherlock Holmes seems to be making his presence heavily felt in these good deal less than Victorian 1970s. Over the last year, there has been a veritable explosion of enthusiasm for any and all things Sherlockian; from his team-up with Sigmund Freud in Nicholas Meyer's entertaining novel, *THE SEVEN PERCENT SOLUTION*, which topped the best-seller charts, through the Royal Shakespeare Company's hit Broadway play, to the soon-to-open (at this writing) Gene Wilder movie, *SHERLOCK HOLMES' SMARTER YOUNGER BROTHER.*

Really, the renewed interest in Baker Street's most famous resident shouldn't be surprising. We're going through a period of intense economic and social upheaval, of changing life-styles and attitudes. During unsettled times people need heroes and heroines; figures of constancy and dependability when all else is changing. Few heroes, living or fictional, have been so constant, or so constantly appealing, as Conan Doyle's master detective. Far beyond any individual story, Holmes lives as a character, his forceful personality, eccentric habits, his methods of observation and deduction, have blended to make him perhaps the most well-known character ever in fiction. Whether first encountered in book, movie, play, or radio broadcast, the carefully-built image of the man of cool logic that is Sherlock Holmes creeps into the memory, endures...and impresses.

Holmes has probably been least well served by comics. Previous attempts to do the World's First Consulting Detective in graphic story form concentrated either on sheer action or moving the plot to such an extent that the most important aspect of Holmes—his character—was virtually lost. When we decided to do our own Sherlock Holmes project, Publisher/Editorial Director Stan Lee wanted to make *certain* this pitfall was avoided. Writer Doug Moench was instructed to make certain all the nuances and details of Holmes' manner and method were faithfully retained. With two full issues of MARVEL PREVIEW to work with. Doug and artist Val Mayerik were able to do this as no other adaptors have. Still, a comic *isn't* a novel; we have taken some liberties with the original, particularly in next issue's concluding part; mostly adding some scenes to take advantage of working in a more visual medium.

But Holmes, as conceived by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *has* been retained. Doug and Val labored long and hard to make sure it's the most accurate rendition yet tried. Helping out with the visual end of things were Frank Thorne, who did our frontispiece and the illustration for this page, and Dan Adkins, who inked Val's striking splash page and contributed a couple of dynamic extra scenes on his own.

So much for background. Right now there's 56 pages of eerie legend and mounting mystery awaiting you in the swirling fog of Victorian London. Hurry. For, as Holmes himself would cry, "The game is afoot!"

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S

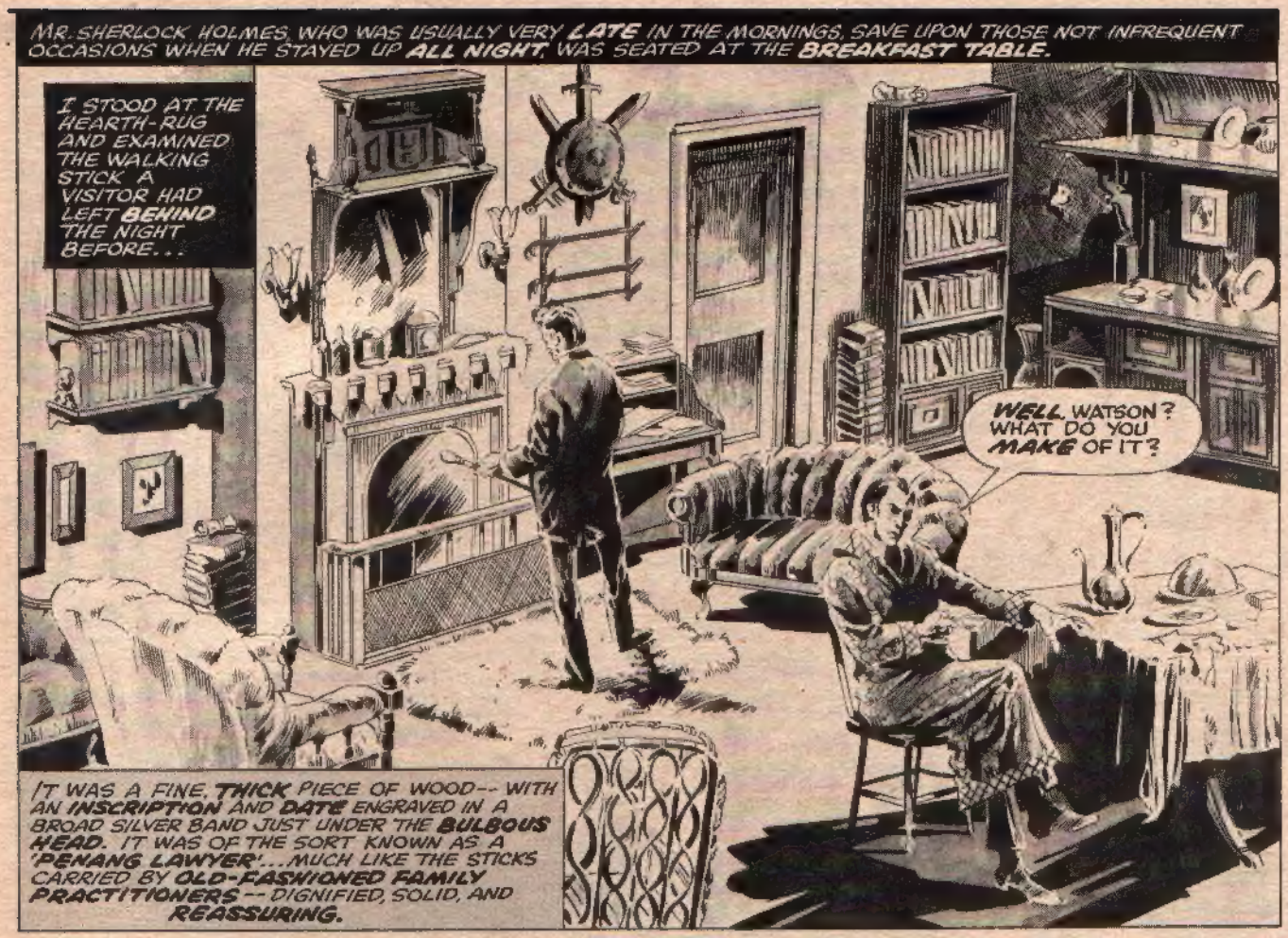
SHERLOCK HOLMES™

AG-187

PART ONE

"THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES"

SCRIPT: DOUG MOENCH • ART: VAL MAYERIK • BASED ON THE RECORDS OF JOHN H. WATSON, M.D.


MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES, WHO WAS USUALLY VERY LATE IN THE MORNINGS, SAVE UPON THOSE NOT INFREQUENT OCCASIONS WHEN HE STAYED UP ALL NIGHT, WAS SEATED AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE.
I STOOD AT THE HEARTH-RUG AND EXAMINED THE WALKING STICK A VISITOR HAD LEFT BEHIND THE NIGHT BEFORE...
WELL, WATSON? WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT?
IT WAS A FINE, THICK PIECE OF WOOD-- WITH AN INSCRIPTION AND DATE ENGRAVED IN A BROAD SILVER BAND JUST UNDER THE BULBOUS HEAD. IT WAS OF THE SORT KNOWN AS A 'PENANG LAWYER'...MUCH LIKE THE STICKS CARRIED BY OLD-FASHIONED FAMILY PRACTITIONERS -- DIGNIFIED, SOLID, AND REASSURING.

HOLMES WAS SITTING WITH HIS BACK TO ME-- AND I HAD GIVEN HIM NO CLUE TO MY ACTIVITY...
HOW DID YOU KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING, HOLMES?
AM I TO ASSUME YOU NOW HAVE EYES IN THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD--?

OF COURSE NOT-- BUT I DO HAVE A WELL-POLISHED SILVER-PLATED COFFEE-POT IN FRONT OF ME.

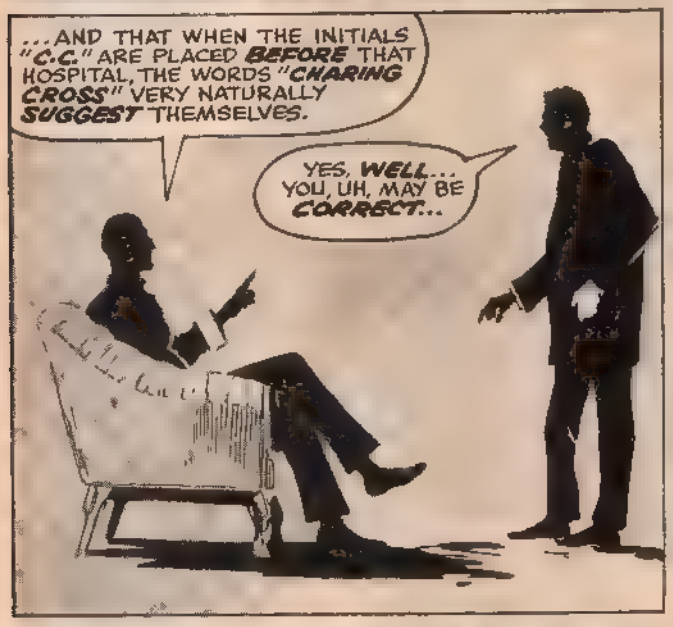
BUT TELL ME, WATSON-- WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF OUR VISITOR'S STICK?
SINCE WE HAVE BEEN SO UNFORTUNATE AS TO MISS HIM LAST NIGHT--AND THEREFORE HAVE NO NOTION OF HIS ERRAND-- OUR ACCIDENTAL SOUVENIR NOW TAKES ON IMPORTANCE...
LET ME HEAR YOU RECONSTRUCT THE MAN BY AN EXAMINATION OF HIS STICK.
THUS, FOLLOWING SO FAR AS I COULD THE METHODS OF MY COMPANION, I ADDRESSED THE STICK WITH CLOSER SCRUTINY AND VENTURED MY OBSERVATIONS...
I WOULD SAY THAT DR. MORTIMER IS A SUCCESSFUL ELDERLY MEDICAL MAN...
...AND WELL-ESTEEMED, SINCE THOSE WHO KNOW HIM HAVE PRESENTED HIM THIS MARK OF THEIR APPRECIATION.
TO JAMES MORTIMER M.R.C.S. FROM HIS FRIENDS OF THE C.C.H. 1884
GOOD, WATSON-- EXCELLENT!
FURTHERMORE, I WOULD SAY THAT PROBABILITY FAVORS HIM BEING A COUNTRY PRACTITIONER-- WHO DOES A GREAT DEAL OF HIS VISITING OF FOOT.
WHY SO?
BECAUSE THE STICK-- THOUGH ORIGINALLY A VERY HANDSOME ONE-- HAS BEEN SO KNOCKED ABOUT THAT I CAN HARDLY IMAGINE A TOWN PRACTITIONER CARRYING IT...
AND THE THICK IRON FERRULE HERE ON THE BOTTOM IS WORN DOWN-- SO IT IS EVIDENT THAT HE HAS DONE A GREAT AMOUNT OF WALKING WITH IT.

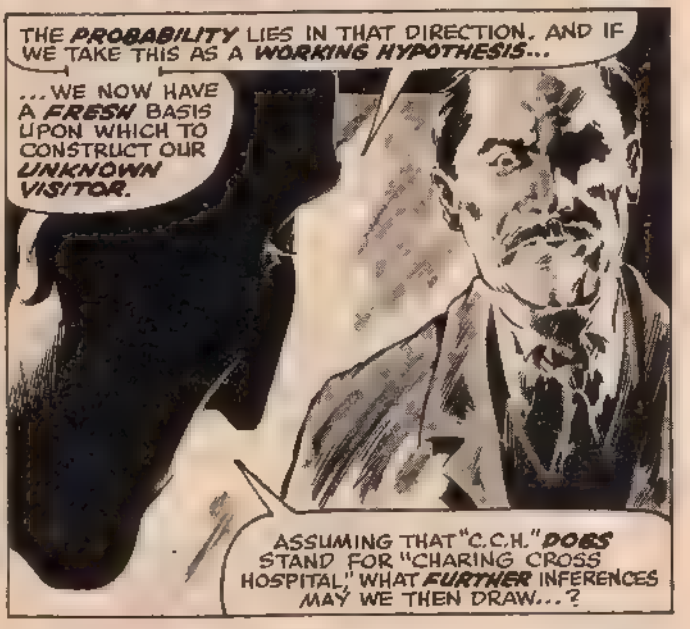
PERFECTLY SOUND.
AND THEN THERE IS THE "FRIENDS OF THE C.C.H." INSCRIPTION. I SHOULD GUESS THAT TO BE THE SOMETHING-SOMETHING HUNT...
...PERHAPS A LOCAL HUNT CLUB TO WHOSE MEMBERS HE HAS ACCORDED SOME SURGICAL ASSISTANCE, AND WHO HAVE MADE THIS SMALL PRESENTATION IN RETURN.
REALLY, WATSON-- YOU EXCEL YOURSELF.
I MUST SAY THAT IN ALL THE ACCOUNTS YOU HAVE BEEN SO GOOD AS TO WRITE OF MY SMALL ACHIEVEMENTS, YOU HAVE HABITUALLY UNDERRATED YOUR OWN ABILITIES...
I MUST ADMIT THAT HIS WORDS GAVE ME KEEN PLEASURE, FOR I HAD OFTEN BEEN PIQUED BY HIS INDIFFERENCE TO MY ADMIRATION AND TO THE PUBLICITY I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO BRING TO HIS METHODS...
I WAS PROUD, TOO, TO THINK THAT I HAD SUFFICIENTLY MASTERED HIS SYSTEM AS TO APPLY IT IN A MANNER WHICH EARNED HIS APPROVAL.
INDEED, IT MAY BE THAT YOU ARE NOT YOURSELF LUMINOUS-- BUT RATHER A CONDUCTOR OF LIGHT.
SOME PEOPLE, WITHOUT POSSESSING GENIUS--
--NEVERTHELESS EMBODY A REMARKABLE POWER OF STIMULATING IT.
YES...I MUST CONFESS, MY DEAR FELLOW--
--THAT I AM VERY MUCH IN YOUR DEBT.

HE HAD MOVED TO THE LIGHT EMITTING THROUGH THE WINDOW, AND THERE STUDIED THE CANE THROUGH A CONVEX LENS...
INTERESTING...
...THOUGH ELEMENTARY, OF COURSE.
STILL, THERE ARE CERTAINLY ONE OR TWO INDICATIONS UPON THE STICK...
...SERVING AS THE BASIS FROM WHICH WE MAY DERIVE SEVERAL DEDUCTIONS
OH? I TRUST THAT THERE IS NOTHING OF CONSEQUENCE WHICH HAS ESCAPED ME.
I AM AFRAID, MY DEAR WATSON--
TO BE ENTIRELY FRANK, WHEN I SAID THAT YOU STIMULATED ME...
...I MEANT THAT IN NOTING YOUR FALLACIES, I AM OCCASIONALLY GUIDED TOWARD THE TRUTH.
BUT...
--THAT MOST OF YOUR CONCLUSIONS WERE ERRONEOUS.

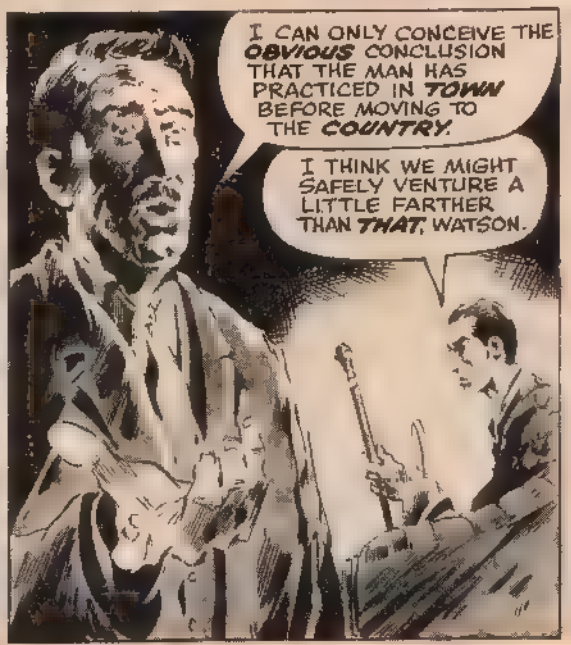
NOT THAT YOU ARE COMPLETELY WRONG IN THIS INSTANCE-- THE MAN IS CERTAINLY A COUNTRY PRACTITIONER. AND HE WALKS A GOOD DEAL.
THEN I WAS RIGHT...?
TO THAT EXTENT.
BUT THAT WAS ALL TO BE FOUND...

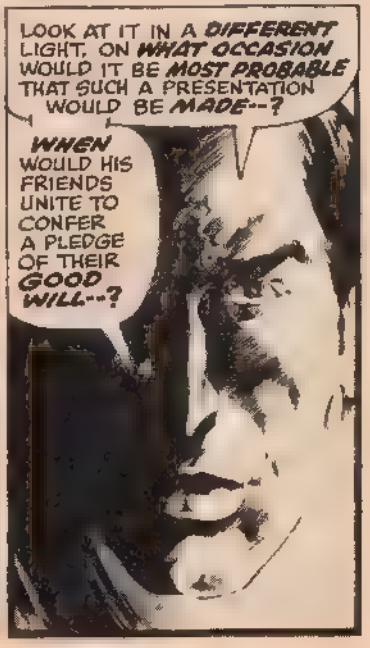
NO, NO, MY DEAR WATSON, NOT ALL-- BY NO MEANS ALL.
I WOULD SUGGEST, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT A PRESENTATION TO A DOCTOR IS MORE LIKELY TO TO COME FROM A HOSPITAL THAN FROM A HUNT CLUB...


...AND THAT WHEN THE INITIALS "C.C." ARE PLACED BEFORE THAT HOSPITAL, THE WORDS "CHARING CROSS" VERY NATURALLY SUGGEST THEMSELVES.
YES, WELL... YOU, UH, MAY BE CORRECT...


THE PROBABILITY LIES IN THAT DIRECTION. AND IF WE TAKE THIS AS A WORKING HYPOTHESIS...
...WE NOW HAVE A FRESH BASIS UPON WHICH TO CONSTRUCT OUR UNKNOWN VISITOR.
ASSUMING THAT "C.C.H." DOES STAND FOR "CHARING CROSS HOSPITAL," WHAT FURTHER INFERENCES MAY WE THEN DRAW...?

DO NONE SUGGEST THEM-SELVES?
YOU KNOW MY METHODS.
APPLY THEM!


I CAN ONLY CONCEIVE THE OBVIOUS CONCLUSION THAT THE MAN HAS PRACTICED IN TOWN BEFORE MOVING TO THE COUNTRY.
I THINK WE MIGHT SAFELY VENTURE A LITTLE FARTHER THAN THAT, WATSON.


LOOK AT IT IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT. ON WHAT OCCASION WOULD IT BE MOST PROBABLE THAT SUCH A PRESENTATION WOULD BE MADE--?
WHEN WOULD HIS FRIENDS UNITE TO CONFER A PLEDGE OF THEIR GOOD WILL--?

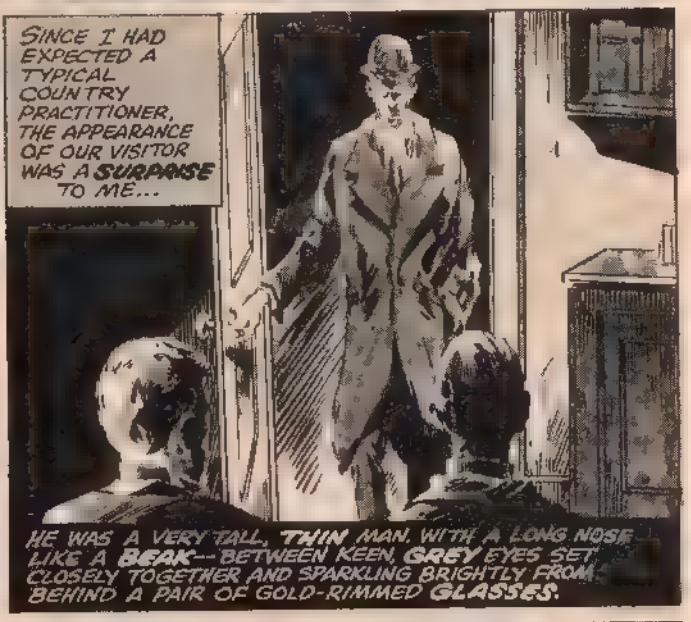
WELL... I...
OBVIOUSLY, WATSON, AT THE MOMENT WHEN DR. MORTIMER RETIRED FROM THE HOSPITAL TO BEGIN HIS OWN PRACTICE
WE KNOW THERE HAS BEEN A PRESENTATION. WE BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE FROM A TOWN HOSPITAL TO A COUNTRY PRACTICE...
IS IT, THEN, STRETCHING OUR INFERENCE TOO FAR TO SAY THAT THE PRESENTATION WAS ON THE OCCASION OF THE CHANGE--?
WELL, IT CERTAINLY SEEMS REASONABLE ENOUGH.
NOW: YOU WILL PERCEIVE THAT HE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN ON THE STAFF OF THE HOSPITAL, SINCE ONLY A MAN WELL-ESTABLISHED IN A LONDON PRACTICE COULD HOLD SUCH A POSITION-- AND SUCH A MAN WOULD NOT DRIFT INTO THE COUNTRY.
WHAT WAS HE, THEN?
IF HE WAS IN THE HOSPITAL AND YET NOT ON THE STAFF, HE COULD HAVE BEEN LITTLE MORE THAN A SENIOR STUDENT-- PERHAPS A HOUSE-SURGEON, OR A HOUSE-PHYSICIAN.
AND HE LEFT FIVE YEARS AGO-- THE DATE IS ON THE STICK. SO YOUR GRAVE MIDDLE-AGED FAMILY PRACTITIONER VANISHES INTO THIN AIR, MY DEAR WATSON...
...AND IN HIS PLACE MATERIALIZES A YOUNG FELLOW UNDER THIRTY AMIABLE, UNAMBITIOUS ABSENT-MINDED...
...AND THE POSSESSOR OF A FAVORITE DOG WHICH I SHOULD ROUGHLY DESCRIBE AS BEING LARGER THAN A TERRIER--
--BUT SMALLER THAN A MASTIFF.
HAH! ABSOLUTELY REMARKABLE, HOLMES.

AS FOR THE DOG, I HAVE NO MEANS OF CORROBORATING YOU...
...BUT IT WILL NOT BE DIFFICULT TO GLEAN A FEW PARTICULARS ABOUT THE MAN'S AGE AND PROFESSIONAL CAREER.
FROM MY SMALL MEDICAL SHELF, I EXTRACTED THE MEDICAL DIRECTORY...
THERE WERE SEVERAL MORTIMERS, BUT ONLY ONE WHO COULD BE OUR SUBJECT. I READ HIS RECORD ALOUD...
MORTIMER, JAMES, M.R.C.S., 1882, GRIMPEN, DARTMOOR, DEVON. HOUSE-SURGEON FROM 1882 TO '84 AT CHARING CROSS HOSPITAL. WINNER OF THE JACKSON PRIZE FOR COMPARATIVE PATHOLOGY...
CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE SWEDISH PATHOLOGICAL SOCIETY. AUTHOR OF "SOME FREAKS OF ATAVISM" PUBLISHED IN LANCET, 1882...
...AND PRESENTLY MEDICAL OFFICER FOR THE PARISHES OF GRIMPEN, THORSLEY, AND HIGH BARROW.
BUT NO MENTION OF YOUR LOCAL HUNT CLUB, WATSON.
THEREFORE, I THINK I AM FAIRLY JUSTIFIED IN MY SPECULATIONS.
AS FOR MY ADJECTIVES, I BELIEVE I SAID AMIABLE, UNAMBITIOUS, AND ABSENT-MINDED...
IT IS MY EXPERIENCE THAT ONLY AN AMIABLE MAN RECEIVES TESTIMONIALS...
...ONLY AN UNAMBITIOUS ONE ABANDONS A LONDON CAREER FOR THE COUNTRY...
...AND ONLY AN ABSENT-MINDED ONE LEAVES HIS WALKING STICK BUT NOT HIS CALLING-CARD AFTER WAITING AN HOUR IN YOUR ROOM.

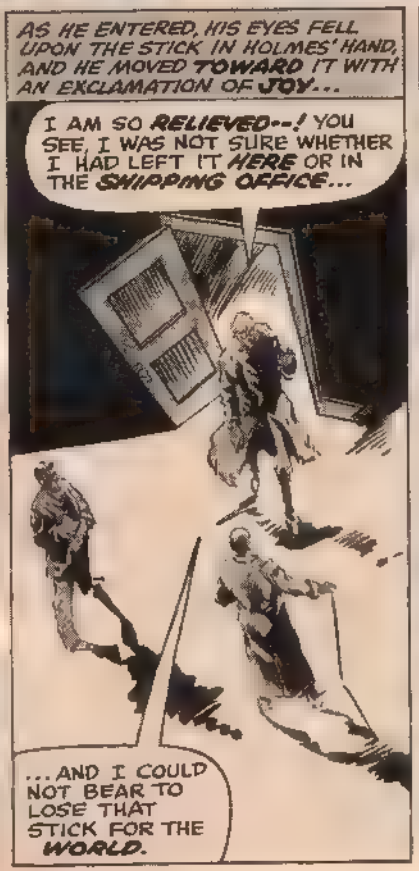
AND THE DOG...?
HAS BEEN IN THE HABIT OF CARRYING THIS STICK BEHIND HIS MASTER.
BEING A HEAVY STICK, THE DOG HAS HELD IT TIGHTLY BY THE MIDDLE..
... LEAVING THE INCISED MARKS OF ITS TEETH PLAINLY VISIBLE.
THE DOG'S JAW, AS CALIBRATED BY THE SPACE BETWEEN THE TEETH-MARKS, IS TOO BROAD FOR A TERRIER AND NOT BROAD ENOUGH FOR A MASTIFF.
IT MAY HAVE BEEN--
YES, BY JOVE-- IT IS A CURLY-HAIRED SPANIEL!
BUT MY DEAR FELLOW-- HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY BE SO SURE OF THAT--?
FOR THE VERY SIMPLE REASON, WATSON--
--THAT I SEE THE DOG HIMSELF ON OUR VERY DOOR-STEP.
AND THERE IS THE RING OF ITS OWNER.
DON'T MOVE, I BEG YOU, WATSON. HE IS A PROFESSIONAL BROTHER OF YOURS, AND YOUR PRESENCE MAY BE OF ASSISTANCE TO ME...

NOW IS THE DRAMATIC MOMENT OF FATE, WATSON, WHEN YOU HEAR THE STAIR CREAK UNDER THE STEP OF ONE WHO IS WALKING INTO YOUR LIFE, AND YOU KNOW NOT WHETHER FOR GOOD OR ILL.
WHAT DOES DR. JAMES MORTIMER, THE MAN OF SCIENCE, ASK OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, THE SPECIALIST IN CRIME?

TOK TOK TOK
COME IN!


SINCE I HAD EXPECTED A TYPICAL COUNTRY PRACTITIONER, THE APPEARANCE OF OUR VISITOR WAS A SURPRISE TO ME...
HE WAS A VERY TALL, THIN MAN. WITH A LONG NOSE LIKE A BEAK--BETWEEN KEEN, GREY EYES SET CLOSELY TOGETHER AND SPARKLING BRIGHTLY FROM BEHIND A PAIR OF GOLD-RIMMED GLASSES.

HE WAS CLAD IN A PROFESSIONAL BUT RATHER SLOVENLY FASHION, FOR HIS FROCK-COAT WAS DINGY AND HIS TROUSERS FRAYED.
THOUGH YOUNG, HIS LONG BACK WAS ALREADY BOWED, AND HE WALKED WITH A FORWARD THRUST OF HIS HEAD AND A GENERAL AIR OF PEERING BENEVOLENCE...


AS HE ENTERED, HIS EYES FELL UPON THE STICK IN HOLMES' HAND, AND HE MOVED TOWARD IT WITH AN EXCLAMATION OF JOY...
I AM SO RELIEVED--! YOU SEE, I WAS NOT SURE WHETHER I HAD LEFT IT HERE OR IN THE SHIPPING OFFICE...
...AND I COULD NOT BEAR TO LOSE THAT STICK FOR THE WORLD.

YES... A PRESENTATION, I SEE...
YES, SIR.
FROM CHARING CROSS HOSPITAL?

FROM ONE OR TWO FRIENDS THERE ON THE OCCASION OF MY MARRIAGE.
DEAR, DEAR... THAT'S BAD.
WHY IS IT BAD--?
ONLY IN THAT IT HAS DISARRANGED OUR LITTLE DEDUCTIONS.
BUT... YOUR MARRIAGE, YOU SAY?
YES, SIR. I MARRIED, AND SO LEFT THE HOSPITAL -- AND WITH IT, ALL HOPES OF A CONSULTING PRACTICE.
IT WAS NECESSARY --TO MAKE A HOME OF MY OWN.
AH! WE ARE NOT SO FAR WRONG AFTER ALL!
AND NOW, DR. JAMES MORTIMER --
MISTER, SIR, MISTER -- A HUMBLE M.R.C.S.
AND A MAN OF PRECISE MIND, EVIDENTLY.
A DABBLER IN SCIENCE -- A GATHERER OF SHELLS ON THE SHORE OF THE GREAT UNKNOWN, MR. HOLMES...
I PRESUME IT IS MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES WHOM I AM ADDRESSING AND NOT--
NO; YOU ARE CORRECT, SIR.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU, SIR. I HAVE HEARD YOUR NAME MENTIONED OFTEN IN CONNECTION WITH THAT OF YOUR FRIEND.
THIS IS MY FRIEND, DR. WATSON.
IT WAS A PLEASANT ENOUGH INTRODUCTION...

...BUT A BRIEF ONE, AS MORTIMER RETURNED HIS ATTENTION TO HOLMES...
YOU INTEREST ME VERY MUCH, MR. HOLMES. I HAD HARDLY EXPECTED SO DOLICHOCEPHALIC A SKULL--OR SUCH WELL-MARKED SUPRA-ORBITAL DEVELOPMENT.
AND WHILE IT IS NOT MY INTENTION TO BE FULSOME, I MUST CONFESS THAT I COVET YOUR SKULL..
A CAST OF IT--UNTIL THE ORIGINAL IS AVAILABLE--WOULD BE A PRIZED ORNAMENT TO ANY ANTHROPOLOGICAL MUSEUM.
WOULD YOU HAVE ANY OBJECTION TO MY EXAMINING YOUR PARIETAL FISSURE...?
I WOULD MUCH RATHER YOU PLEASE BE SEATED, SIR.
OH... YES... OF COURSE.
HOLMES WAS THEN SILENT FOR SEVERAL MOMENTS, BUT HIS LITTLE DARTING GLANCES ILLUSTRATED THE INTEREST HE TOOK IN OUR CURIOUS COMPANION. FINALLY HE SPOKE...
I OBSERVE FROM YOUR FOREFINGER, SIR--
--THAT YOU MAKE YOUR OWN CIGARETTES.
HAVE NO HESITATION IN LIGHTING ONE.
THE MAN DREW OUT PAPER AND TOBACCO, AND TWIRLED THE ONE UP IN THE OTHER WITH SURPRISING DEXTERITY...
I PERCEIVE, SIR, THAT YOU ARE AN ENTHUSIAST IN YOUR LINE OF THOUGHT--AS I AM IN MINE...
HOWEVER, I PRESUME THAT IT WAS NOT MERELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXAMING MY SKULL THAT YOU HAVE CALLED HERE LAST NIGHT AND AGAIN TODAY...?

NO, SIR, NO. I CAME TO YOU, MR. HOLMES, BECAUSE I RECOGNIZE THAT I AM MYSELF AN UNPRACTICAL MAN...
...AND BECAUSE I AM SUDDENLY CONFRONTED WITH A MOST SERIOUS AND EXTRA-ORDINARY PROBLEM.
RECOGNIZING, AS I DO, THAT YOU ARE THE SECOND HIGHEST EXPERT IN EUROPE --
INDEED, SIR! MAY I INQUIRE WHO HAS THE HONOR TO BE THE FIRST--?
TO THE MAN OF PRECISE-LY SCIENTIFIC MIND, THE WORK OF MONSIEUR BERTILLON MUST ALWAYS APPEAL STRONGLY.
THEN HAD YOU NOT BETTER CONSULT HIM?
I SAID, SIR, TO THE PRECISELY SCIENTIFIC MIND.
BUT AS A MAN OF PRACTICAL AFFAIRS, IT IS WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT YOU STAND ALONE.
YOU HAVE, SOMEWHAT...
I SINCERELY HOPE, SIR, THAT I HAVE NOT INADVERTENTLY--
I THINK, DR. MORTIMER, THAT YOU WOULD DO WISELY TO EXPLAIN THE PRECISE NATURE OF YOUR PROBLEM...
...WITHOUT FURTHER EXTRANEOUS DISCOURSE.

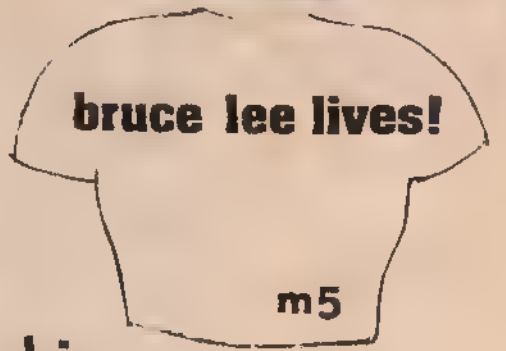
wear bruce lee

m4

m6

m3

m2



m5

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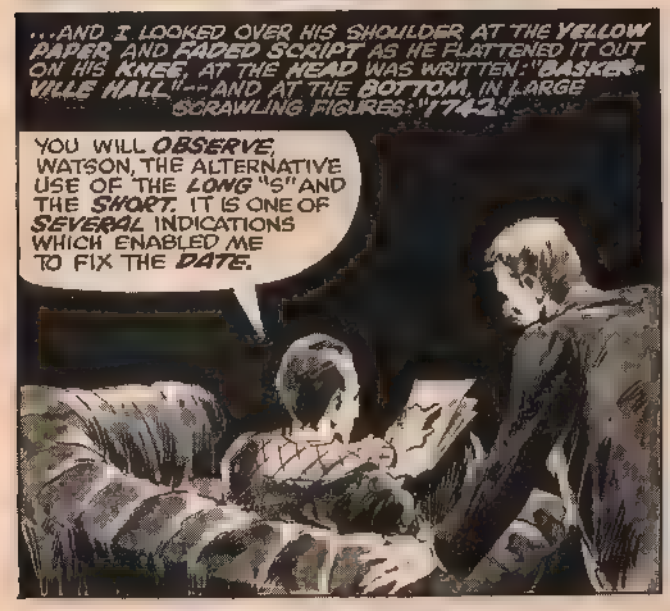
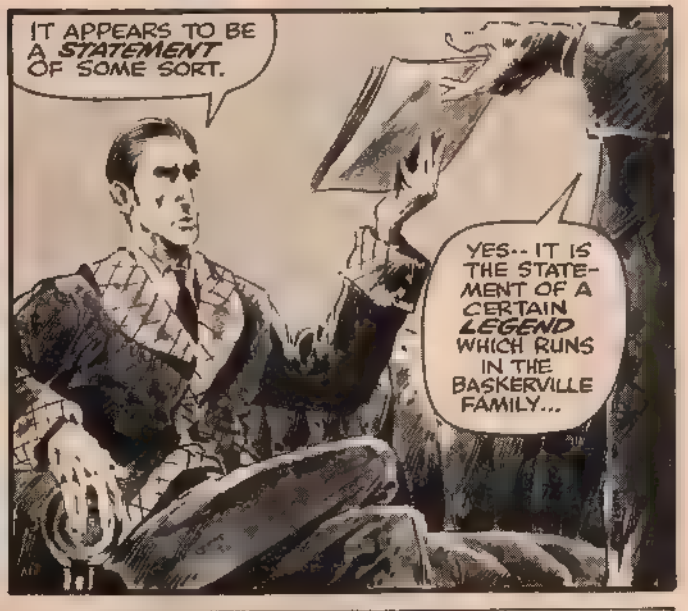
2. THE LEGEND
I HAVE IN MY POCKET A MANUSCRIPT--
I OBSERVED IT AS YOU ENTERED THE ROOM.
IT IS AN OLD MANUSCRIPT WHICH--
EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, UNLESS IT IS A FORGERY.
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT, SIR?
YOU HAVE PRESENTED AN INCH OR TWO OF IT TO MY SCRUTINY ALL THE TIME YOU HAVE BEEN TALKING...
IT WOULD BE A POOR EXPERT INDEED WHO COULD NOT ESTIMATE THE DATE OF A DOCUMENT WITHIN A DECADE OR SO. YOU MAY HAVE READ MY LITTLE MONO-GRAPH ON THE SUBJECT...
I WOULD SET YOUR DOCUMENT AT 1730.

THE EXACT DATE OF THIS FAMILY PAPER IS 1742, MR. HOLMES.
IT WAS COMMITTED TO MY CARE BY SIR CHARLES BASKERVILLE, WHOSE SUDDEN AND TRAGIC DEATH SOME THREE MONTHS AGO CREATED SO MUCH EXCITEMENT IN DEVONSHIRE.

AS WELL AS HIS MEDICAL ATTENDANT, I WAS A PERSONAL FRIEND OF SIR CHARLES. HE WAS A STRONG-MINDED MAN, SIR... SHREWD, PRACTICAL, AND AS UNIMAGINATIVE AS I AM MYSELF.
YET HE TOOK THIS DOCUMENT VERY SERIOUSLY..

...AND HIS MIND WAS PREPARED FOR JUST SUCH AN END AS DID EVENTUALLY OVERTAKE HIM.
HOLMES STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND FOR THE MANUSCRIPT...


...AND I LOOKED OVER HIS SHOULDER AT THE YELLOW PAPER AND FADED SCRIPT AS HE FLATTENED IT OUT ON HIS KNEE, AT THE HEAD WAS WRITTEN: "BASKERVILLE HALL"--AND AT THE BOTTOM, IN LARGE SCRAWLING FIGURES: "1742."
YOU WILL OBSERVE, WATSON, THE ALTERNATIVE USE OF THE LONG "S" AND THE SHORT. IT IS ONE OF SEVERAL INDICATIONS WHICH ENABLED ME TO FIX THE DATE.


IT APPEARS TO BE A STATEMENT OF SOME SORT.
YES-- IT IS THE STATEMENT OF A CERTAIN LEGEND WHICH RUNS IN THE BASKERVILLE FAMILY...

BUT IT IS SOMETHING MORE MODERN AND PRACTICAL UPON WHICH YOU YOU WISH TO CONSULT ME?
MOST MODERN, A MOST PRACTICAL, PRESSING MATTER-- WHICH MUST BE DECIDED WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.
BUT THE MANUSCRIPT IS SHORT AND INTIMATELY CONNECTED WITH THE AFFAIR. WITH YOUR PERMISSION I WILL READ IT TO YOU...

HOLMES LEANED BACK IN HIS CHAIR, PLACED HIS FINGERTIPS TOGETHER, AND CLOSED HIS EYES WITH AN AIR OF RESIGNATION. DR. MORTIMER THEN BEGAN TO READ A CURIOUS, OLD-WORLD NARRATIVE...

"OF THE ORIGIN OF THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES THERE HAVE BEEN MANY STATEMENTS, YET AS I COME IN A DIRECT LINE FROM HUGO BASKERVILLE, AND AS I HAD THE STORY FROM MY FATHER, WHO ALSO HAD IT FROM HIS...

"...I HAVE SET IT DOWN WITH ALL BELIEF THAT IT OCCURRED EVEN AS IS HERE SET FORTH.

"AND I WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE, MY SONS, THAT THE SAME JUSTICE WHICH PUNISHES SIN MAY ALSO MOST GRACIOUSLY FORGIVE IT. LEARN, THEN, FROM THIS STORY NOT TO FEAR THE FRUITS OF THE PAST, BUT RATHER BE CIRCUMSPECT IN THE FUTURE...

"...THAT THOSE FOUL PASSIONS WHEREBY OUR FAMILY HAS SO GRIEVOUSLY SUFFERED MAY NOT AGAIN BE LOOSED TO OUR UNDOING...

Know then that in the time of the Great Rebellion, this Manor of Baskerville was held by Hugo of that name...

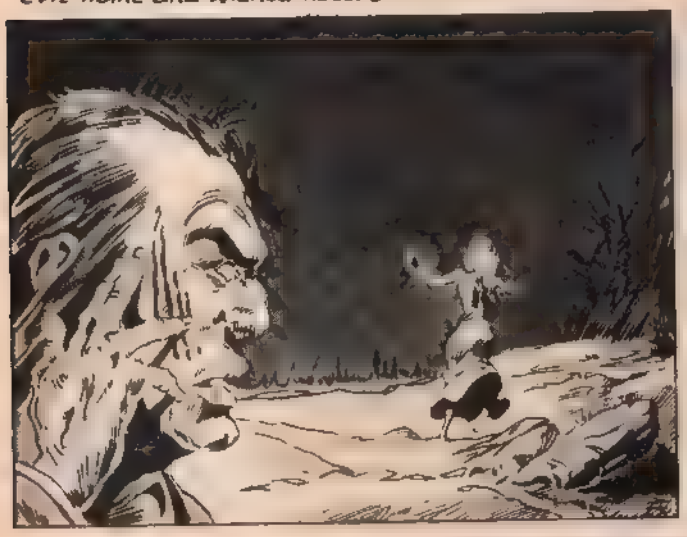
...nor can it be denied that he was a most wild, profane, and godless man.

This, in truth, his neighbors might have pardoned, seeing that saints have never flourished in those parts...

...but there was in him a certain wanton and cruel humour which made his name a feared by-word through the West.

It chanced that this Hugo came to love (if indeed so dark a passion may be known under so bright a word) the daughter of a yoeman who held lands near the Baskerville estate.

But the young maiden, being discreet and of good repute, would ever avoid him, for she feared his evil name and wicked nature.



So it came to pass that one Michaelmass this Hugo, with five or six of his idle and dissolute companions, stole down from the farm...

...and carried off the maiden, her father and brothers being away from home...

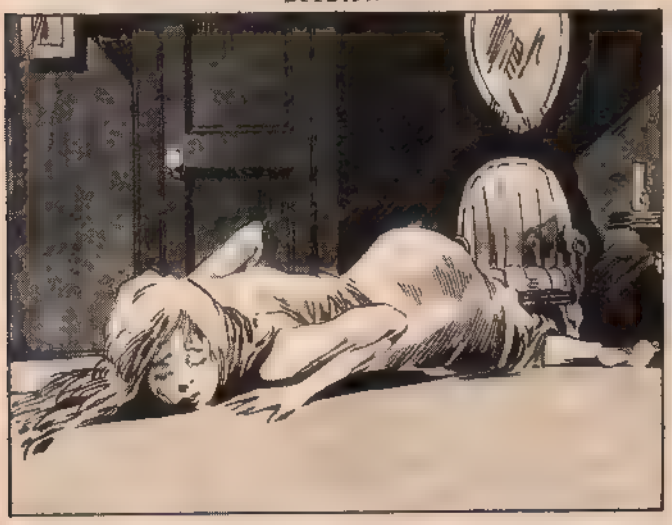
...as Hugo well knew.

When they had brought her back to Baskerville Hall against her will and under fierce protest...

...she was placed in an upper chamber and there imprisoned...

...while Hugo and his friends sat down to a long carouse as was their nightly custom.

Now, the poor lass upstairs was like to have her wits turned by the singing and shouting and terrible oaths which came up to her from below...



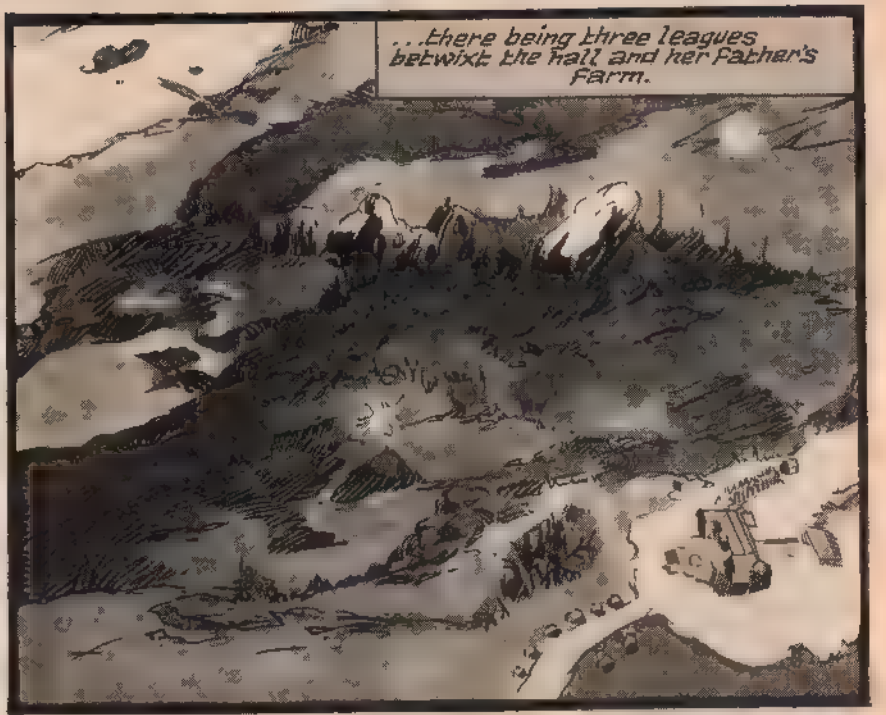
...for they say the words used by Hugo Baskerville, when he was in wine, were such as to forever damn the man who voiced them.

At last, in the stress of her fear, the maiden did that which might have daunted the bravest or most active of men...

...for by the aid of the growth of ivy which covered (and still covers) the south wall, she came down from under the eaves...

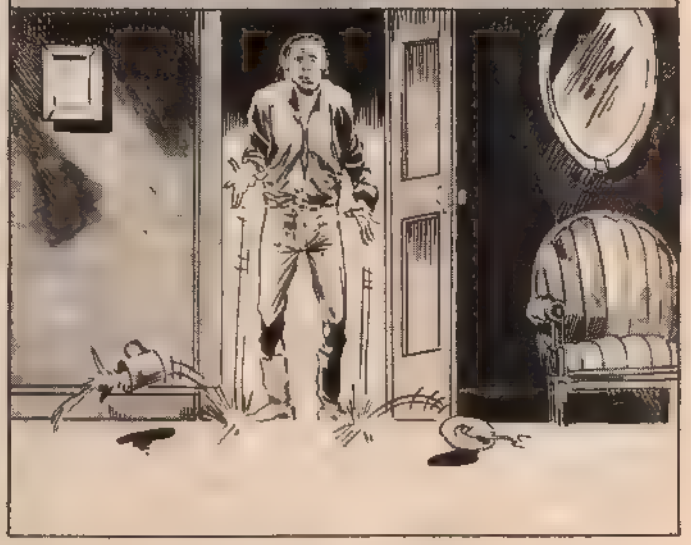
...and so homeward she dashed across the moor...

...there being three leagues betwixt the hall and her father's farm.



It chanced that some little time later Hugo left his guests to carry food and drink--with other worse things, perchance--up to his captive...

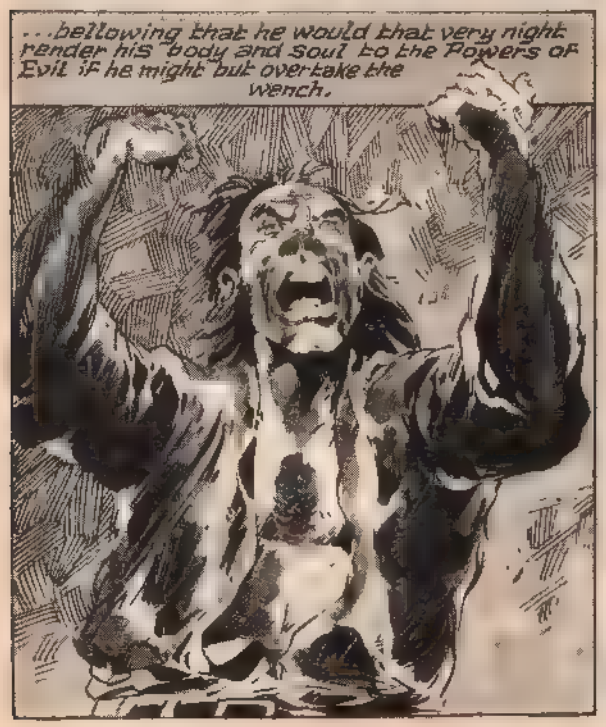
...and so found the cage empty and the bird escaped.



Then, as it would seem, he became as one that hath a devil, for he rushed down the stairs to the great Dining Hall...

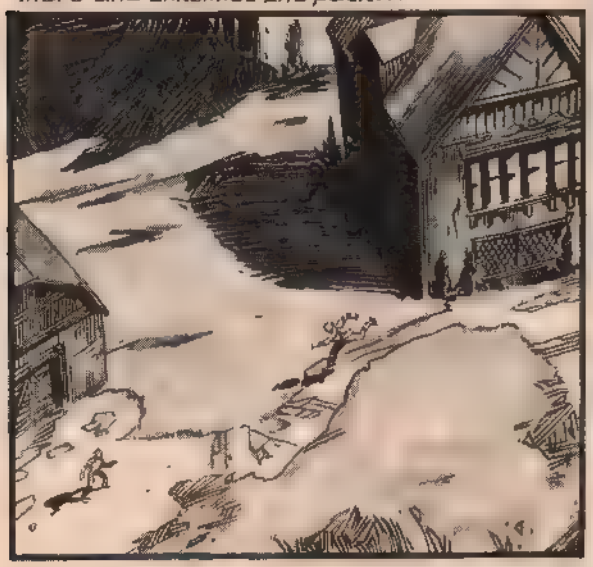
...and sprang upon the great table, flagons and trenchers flying before him, and he cried aloud before all the company...

...bellowing that he would that very night render his body and soul to the Powers of Evil if he might but overtake the wench.



And while the revellers stood aghast at the madness and fury of the man, one there was who, being more wicked--or more drunken--than the rest, cried out that they should put the hounds upon her.

Whereat Hugo ran from the house, crying to his grooms that they should saddle his mare and unkennel the pack...



...and giving the hounds a kerchief of the maids...

...he swung them into line, and so off full-cry in the moonlight over the moor.

Now, for some space the revellers stood agape, but at length some sense came back to their crazed minds, and the whole of them, thirteen in number, also took horse...

...and started in pursuit as the full moon shone clear above them.

They rode swiftly abreast, taking that course which the maid must needs have taken if she were to reach her own home.

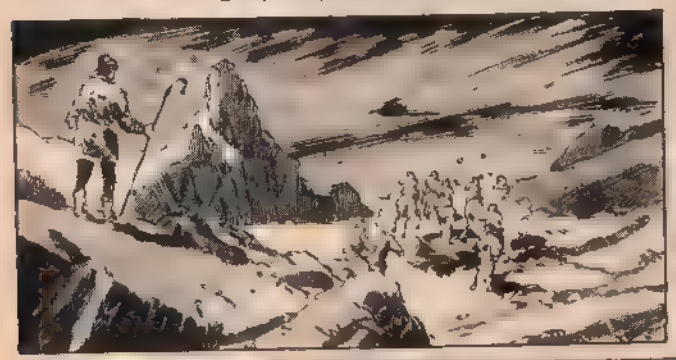
They had gone a mile or two when they passed one of the night shepherds on the moorlands, and they cried to him to ask if he had seen the hunt.

And the man, as the story goes, was so crazed with fear that he could scarce speak...

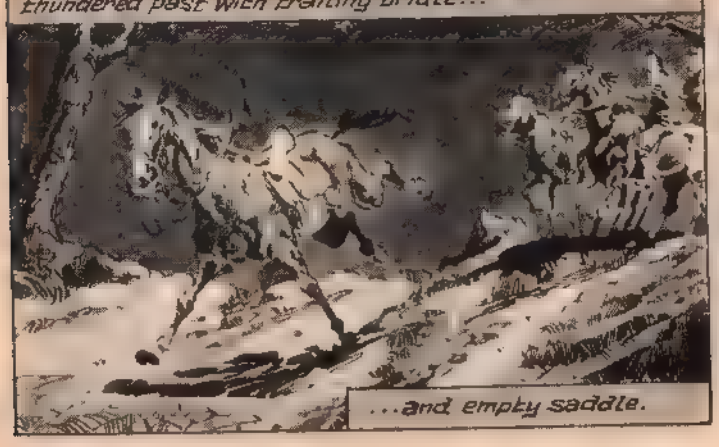
...but at last he said that he had indeed seen the unhappy maiden, with the hounds upon her track.

"But I have seen more than that," said he, "for Hugo Baskerville passed me upon his black mare--

So the drunken squires cursed the shepherd and rode onward...



...and the black mare, dabbled with white froth, thundered past with trailing bridle...



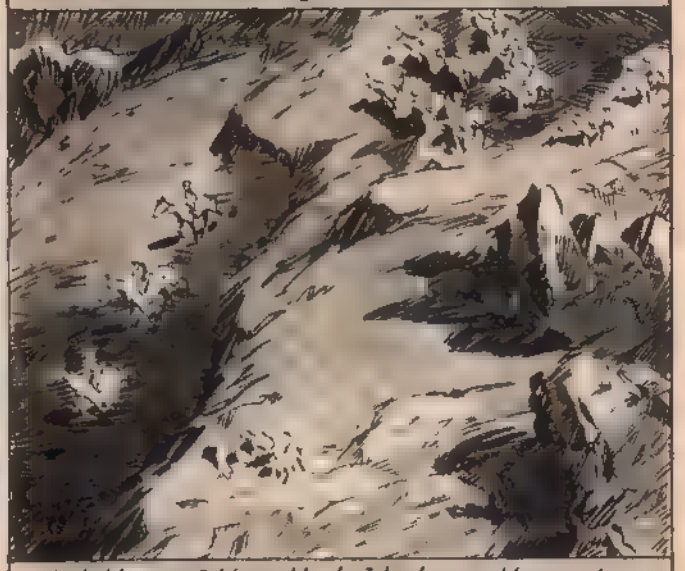
Then the revellers rode close together, for a great fear was upon them. But they still followed over the moor...

...though each, had he been alone, would have been glad to turn his horse's head.

Riding slowly in this fashion, they came at last upon the hounds. These though known for their valour and breed, were whimpering in a cluster at the head of a deep goyal in the moor...

... some slinking away and some, with starting hackles and staring eyes, gazing back down the narrow valley behind them.

The company came to a halt, now more sober men, as you may guess, than when they started. The most of them would by no means advance...



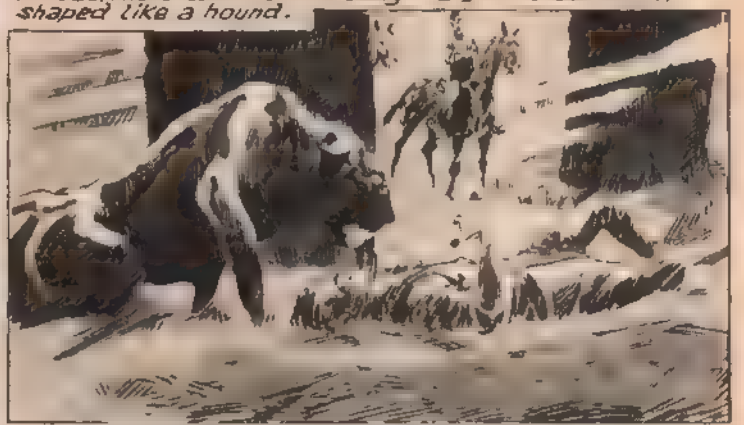
...but three of them, the boldest -- or the most drunken -- rode forward down the goyal.

Now it opened into a broad space in which stood two of those great stones still to be seen there, which were set by certain forgotten peoples in the days of old.

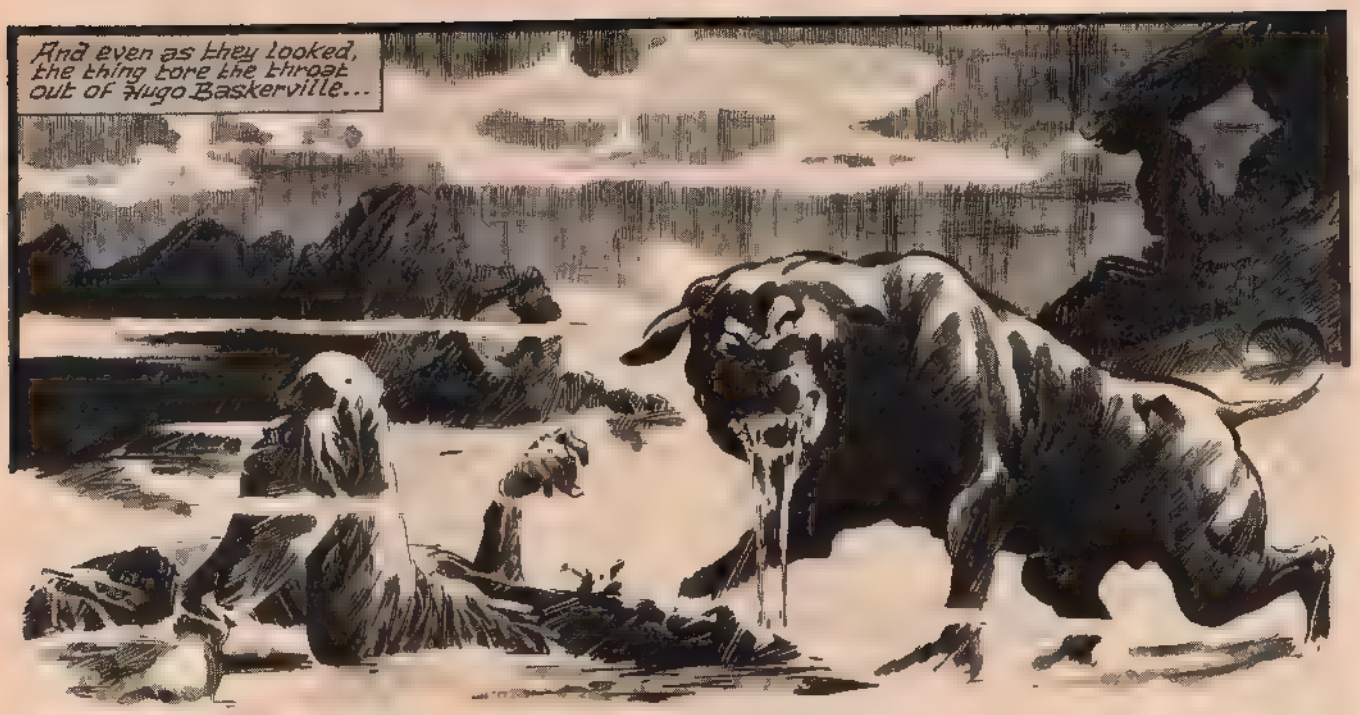
The moon was shining bright upon the clearing and through the thick fog, there in the centre they saw the unhappy maid where she had fallen, dead of fear and fatigue...

But it was not the sight of her body nor yet was it that of the body of Hugo Baskerville lying near her, which raised the hair upon the heads of these three dare-devil roisterers...

...but it was that, crouched over Hugo, and plucking at his throat, there stood a foul thing -- a great black beast, shaped like a hound.

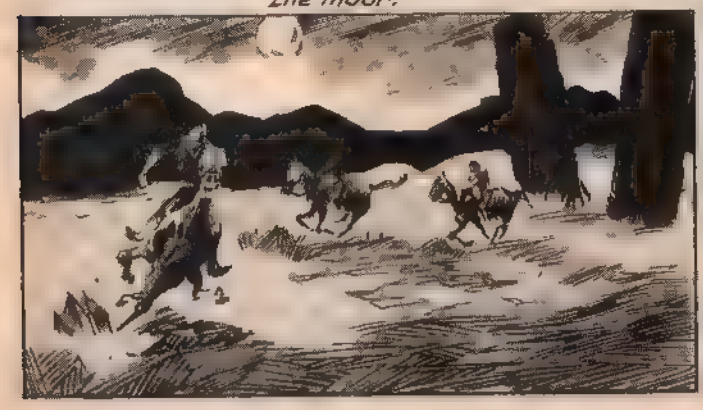


...yet larger than any hound that mortal eye has ever rested upon...



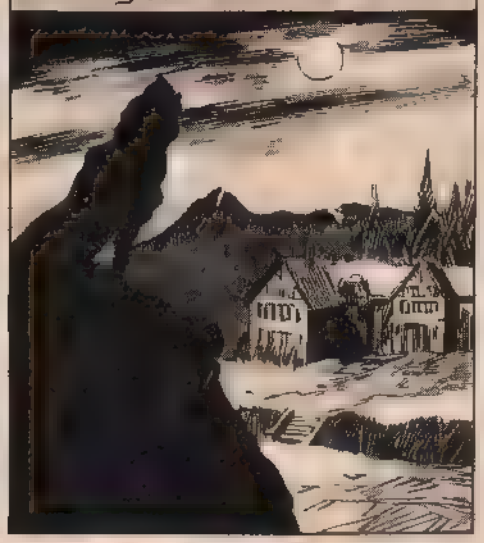
...the three shrieked with quaking terror...

...and rode for dear life, still screaming, across the moor.

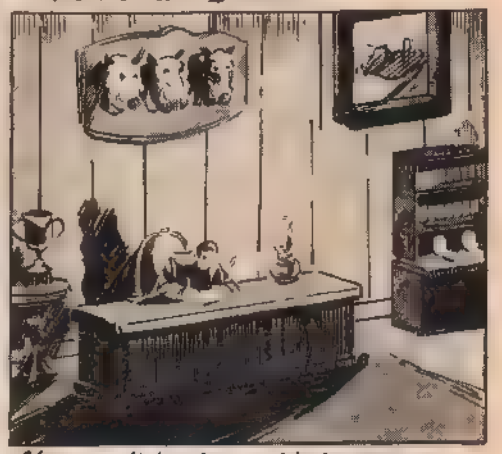


...and the other twain were but broken men for the rest of their days.

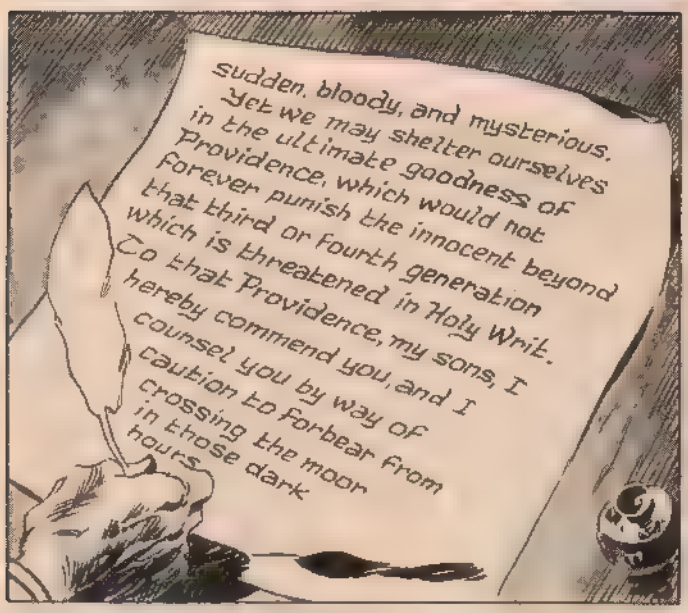
Such is the tale, my sons, of the coming of the Hell-Hound which is said to have plagued the family so sorely ever since.

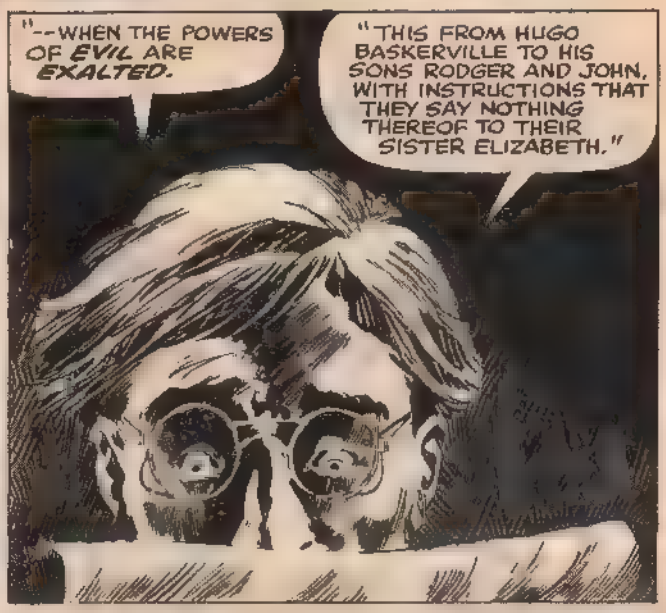


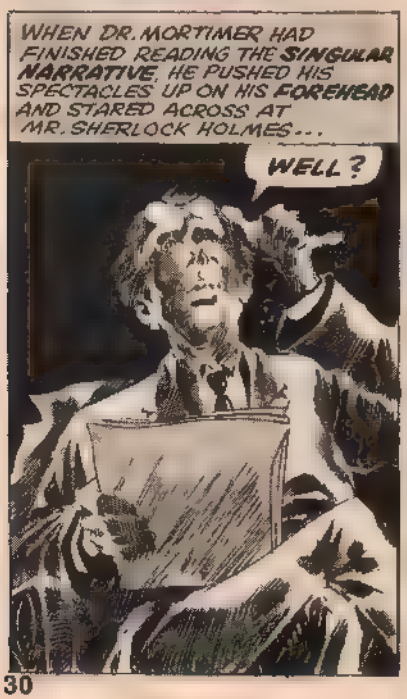
If I have set it down it is because that which is clearly known hath less terror than that which is but hinted at and guessed.



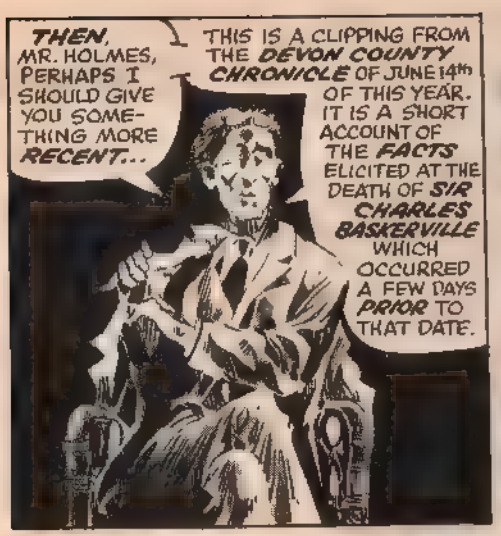
Nor can it be denied that many of the family have been unhappy in their deaths, which have been sudden, bloody and mysterious.

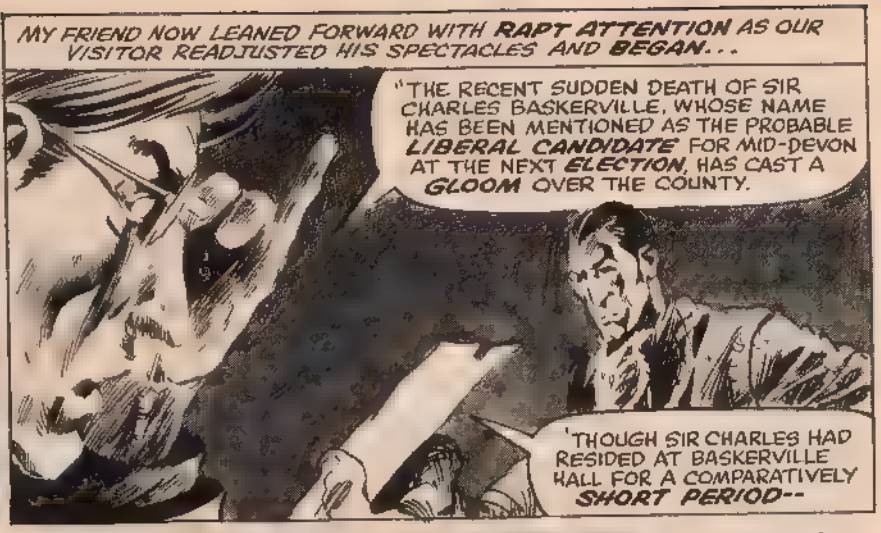

Sudden, bloody, and mysterious. Yet we may shelter ourselves in the ultimate goodness of Providence, which would not forever punish the innocent beyond that third or fourth generation which is threatened in Holy Writ. To that Providence, my sons, I hereby commend you, and I counsel you by way of caution to forbear from crossing the moor in those dark hours.


"--WHEN THE POWERS OF EVIL ARE EXALTED.
"THIS FROM HUGO BASKERVILLE TO HIS SONS RODGER AND JOHN, WITH INSTRUCTIONS THAT THEY SAY NOTHING THEREOF TO THEIR SISTER ELIZABETH."

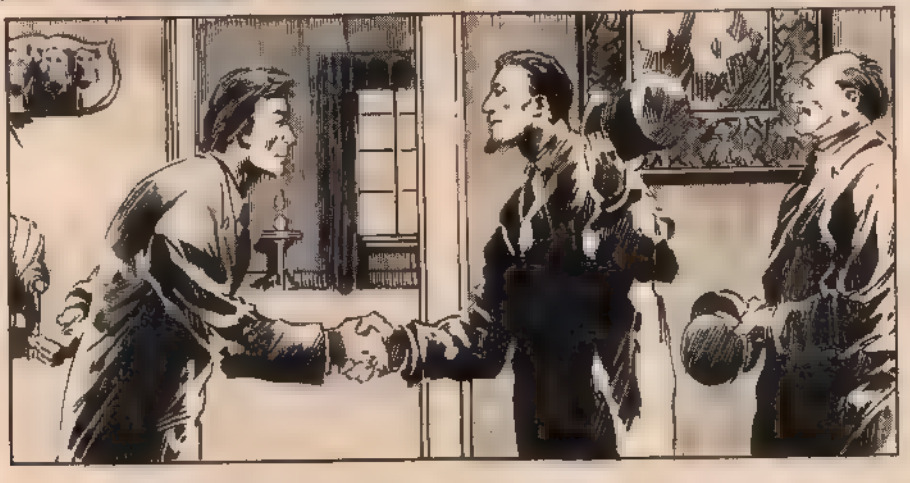

WHEN DR. MORTIMER HAD FINISHED READING THE SINGULAR NARRATIVE, HE PUSHED HIS SPECTACLES UP ON HIS FOREHEAD AND STARED ACROSS AT MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES...
WELL?

BUT HOLMES MERELY COVERED A YAWN, APPARENTLY OF BOREDOM, AND TOSSED THE END OF HIS CIGARETTE INTO THE FIRE...
DO YOU NOT FIND IT INTERESTING--?


THEN, MR. HOLMES, PERHAPS I SHOULD GIVE YOU SOMETHING MORE RECENT...
THIS IS A CLIPPING FROM THE DEVON COUNTY CHRONICLE OF JUNE 14th OF THIS YEAR. IT IS A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE FACTS ELICITED AT THE DEATH OF SIR CHARLES BASKERVILLE WHICH OCCURRED A FEW DAYS PRIOR TO THAT DATE.

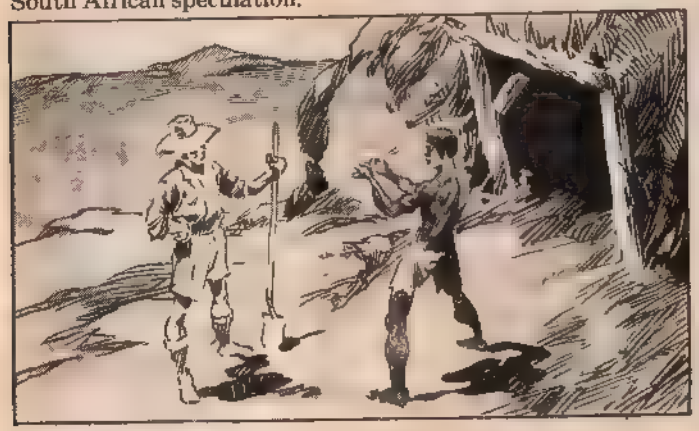

MY FRIEND NOW LEANED FORWARD WITH RAPT ATTENTION AS OUR VISITOR READJUSTED HIS SPECTACLES AND BEGAN...
"THE RECENT SUDDEN DEATH OF SIR CHARLES BASKERVILLE, WHOSE NAME HAS BEEN MENTIONED AS THE PROBABLE LIBERAL CANDIDATE FOR MID-DEVON AT THE NEXT ELECTION, HAS CAST A GLOOM OVER THE COUNTY.
'THOUGH SIR CHARLES HAD RESIDED AT BASKERVILLE HALL FOR A COMPARATIVELY SHORT PERIOD--

His amiability of character and extreme generosity had won the affection and respect of all who had been brought into contact with him.

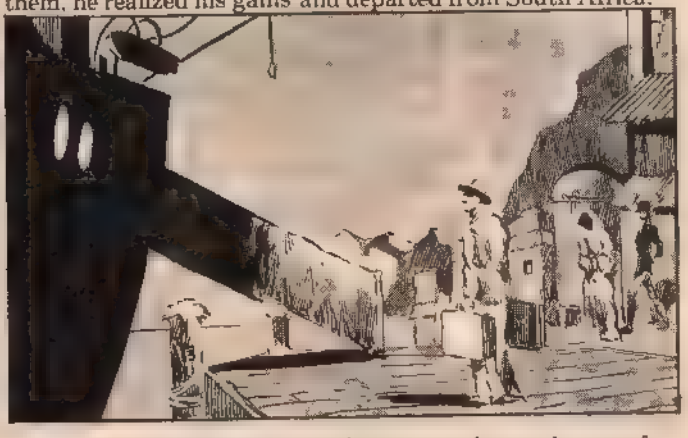


In these days of *nouveaux riches* it is refreshing to find a case where the scion of an old country family which has fallen upon unfortunate days is able to make his own fortune and to bring it back with him to restore the fallen grandeur of his line.

Sir Charles, as is well known, made large sums of money in South African speculation.

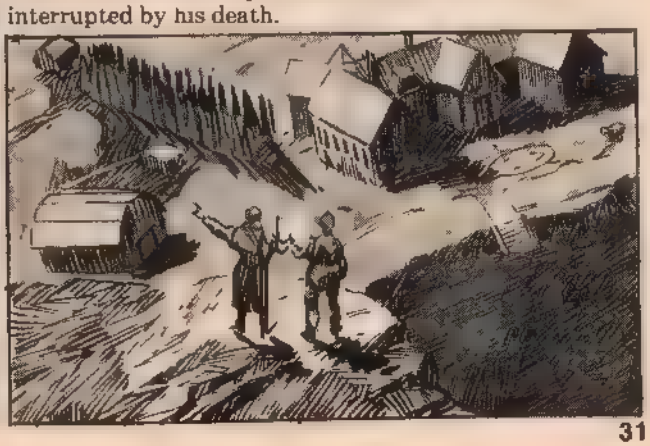


More wise than those who go on until the wheel turns against them, he realized his gains and departed from South Africa.



It is only two years since he returned to England and took up residence in Baskerville Hall.

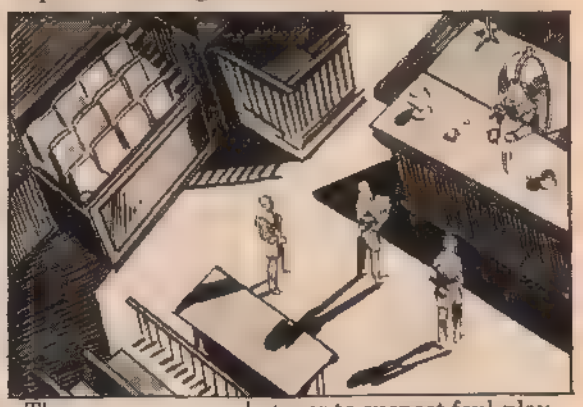
But it is common talk how large were those schemes of reconstruction and improvement which have been interrupted by his death.



Being himself childless, it was his openly expressed desire that the whole countryside should, within his lifetime, profit by his good fortune, and many will have personal reasons for bewailing his untimely end.

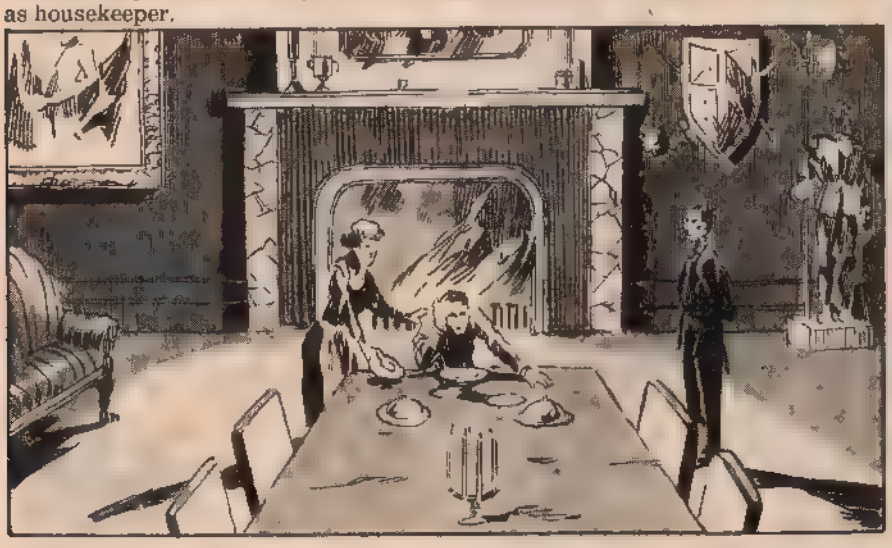
His generous donations to local and county charities have been frequently chronicled in these columns.

The circumstances connected with the death of Sir Charles cannot be said to have been entirely cleared up by the inquest, but at least enough has been done to dispose of those rumors to which local superstition has given rise.



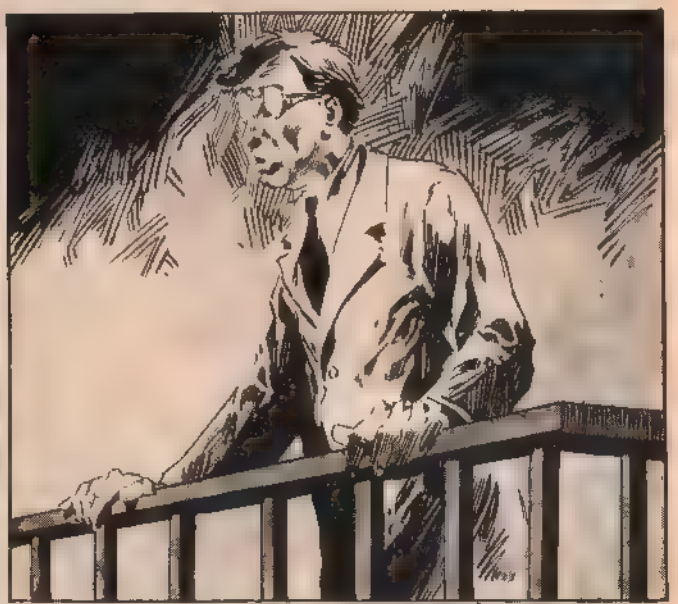
There is no reason whatever to suspect foul play, or to imagine that death could be from any but natural causes.

Sir Charles was a widower, and a man who may be said to have been in some ways of an eccentric habit of mind. In spite of his considerable wealth, he was simple in his personal taste, and his indoor servants at Baskerville Hall consisted of a married couple named Barrymore, the husband acting as butler and the wife as housekeeper.



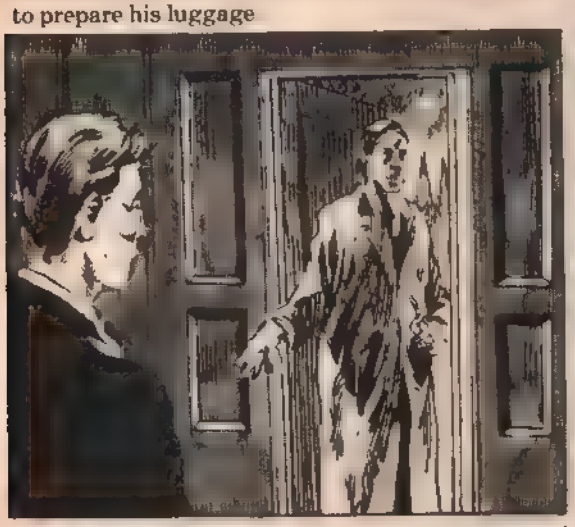
Their evidence, corroborated by that of several friends, tends to show that Sir Charles' health has for some time been impaired.

Their testimony points especially to some affection of the heart, manifesting itself in changes of colour, breathlessness, and acute attacks of nervous depression.



Dr. James Mortimer, the friend and medical attendant of the deceased, has given evidence to the same effect.

The facts of the case are simple. On the 4th of June, Sir Charles had declared his intentions of starting next day for London, and had ordered Barrymore to prepare his luggage

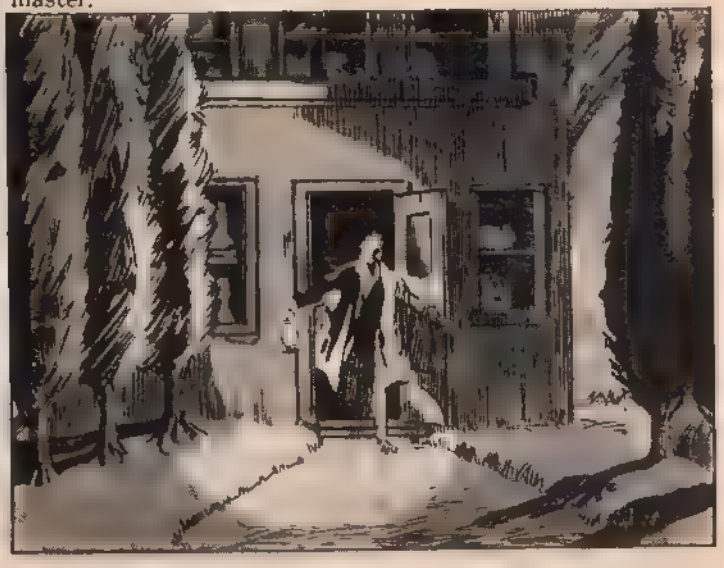


That night, he then went out for his usual nocturnal walk.

It was his habit every night, before going to bed, of walking down the famous Yew Alley of Baskerville Hall, in the course of which he would smoke a cigar.

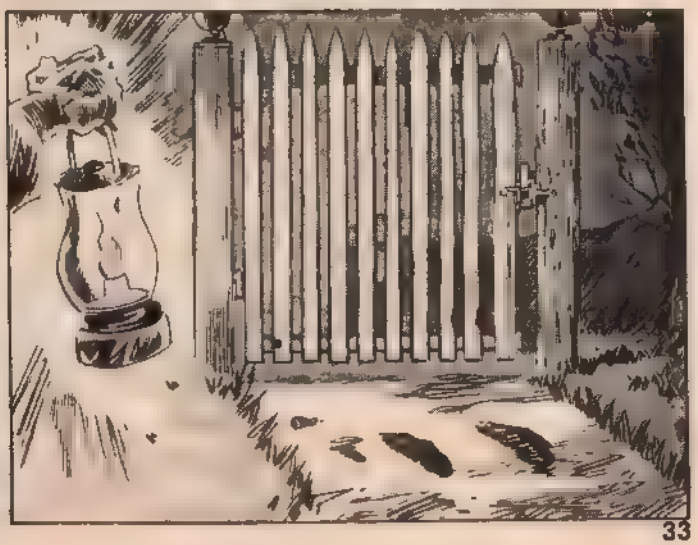
This night, he never returned

At twelve o'clock, finding the hall door still open, Barrymore became alarmed and, lighting a lantern, went in search of his master.

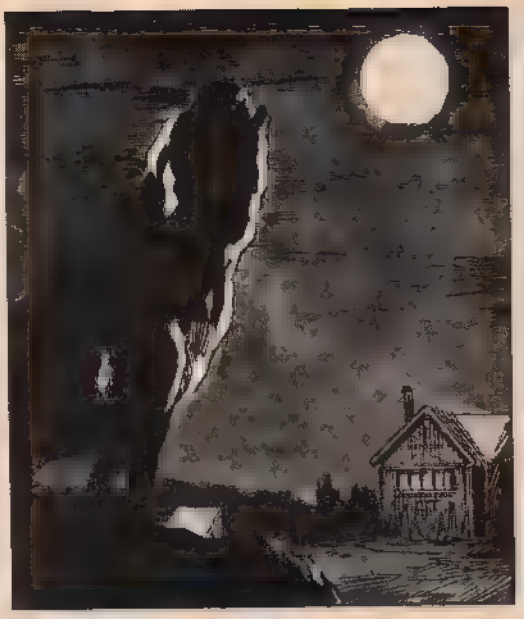


The day had been wet, and Sir Charles' footmarks were easily traced down the alley

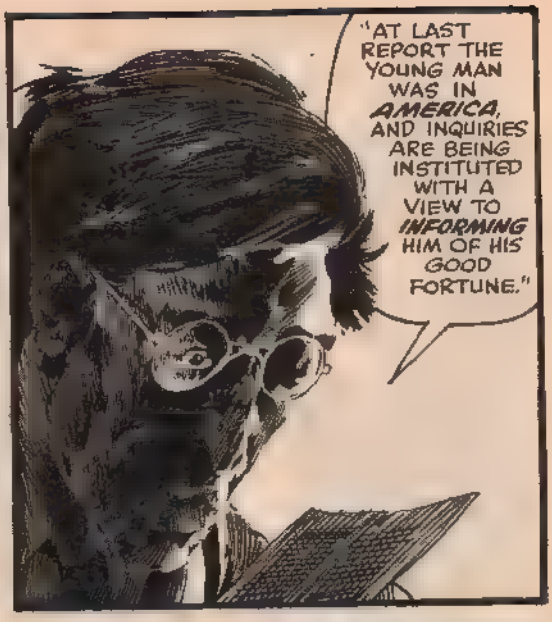
Half-way down this walk there is a gate which leads out on to the moor. There were indications that Sir Charles had stood for some little time there.



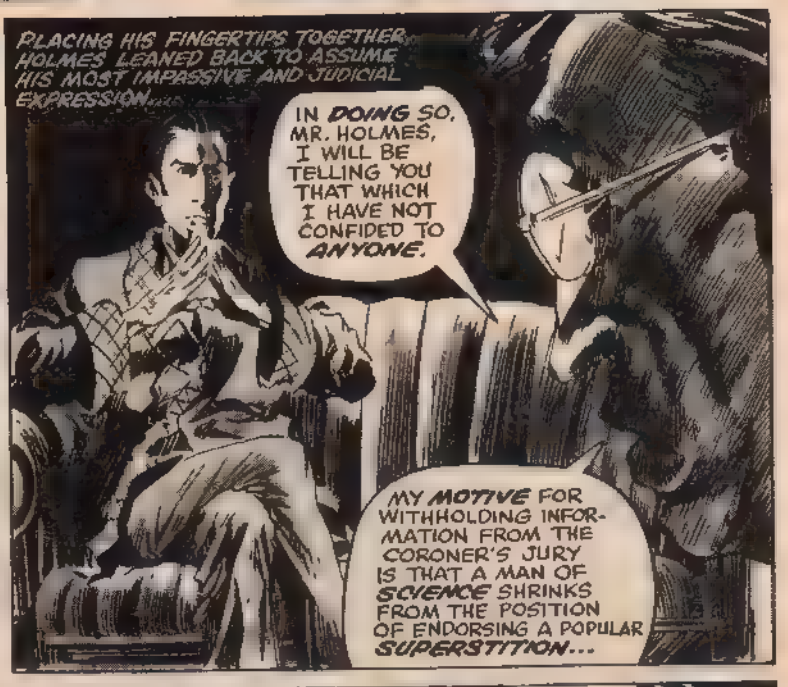
Had the prosaic finding of the coroner not finally put an end to the romantic stories which have been whispered in connection with the affair, it might have been difficult to find a new tenant for Baskerville Hall.

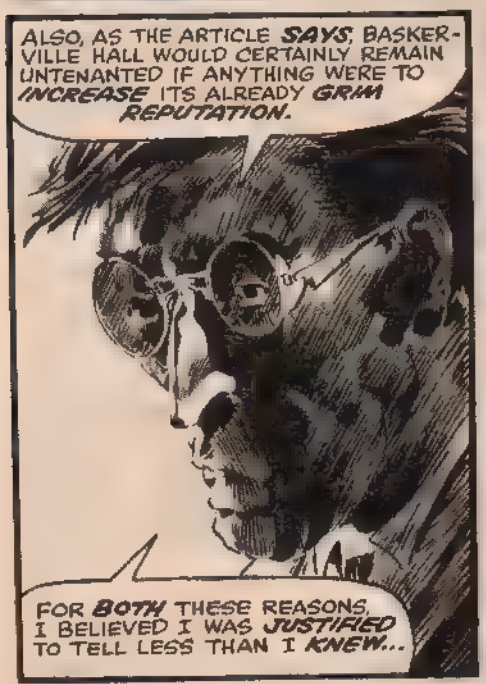


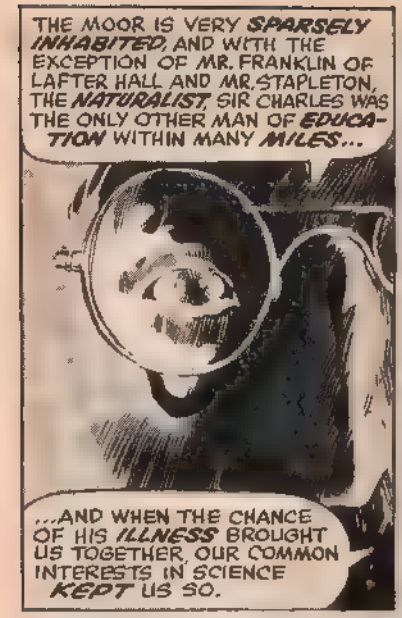
It is understood that the next-of-kin is Mr. Henry Baskerville, if he be still alive, the son of Sir Charles Baskerville's younger brother.

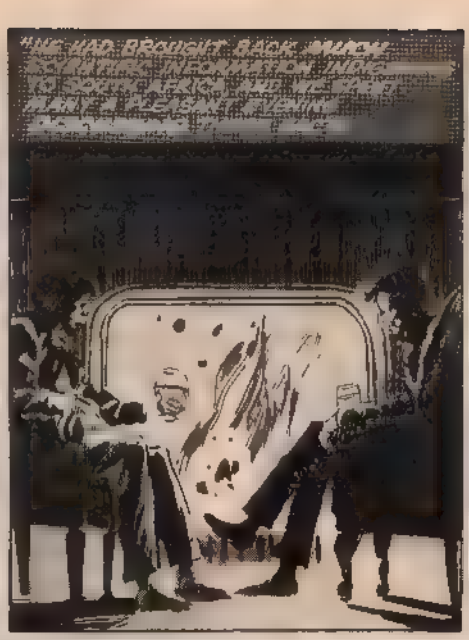

"AT LAST REPORT THE YOUNG MAN WAS IN AMERICA, AND INQUIRIES ARE BEING INSTITUTED WITH A VIEW TO INFORMING HIM OF HIS GOOD FORTUNE."

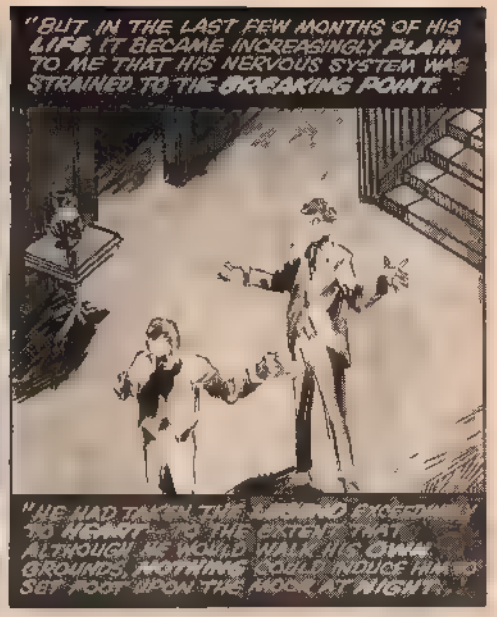
THOSE ARE THE PUBLIC FACTS, MR. HOLMES, IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEATH OF SIR CHARLES BASKERVILLE.
I MUST THANK YOU FOR CALLING MY ATTENTION TO A CASE WHICH CERTAINLY PRESENTS SOME FEATURES OF INTEREST.
YOU SAY THIS ARTICLE CONTAINS ALL THE PUBLIC FACTS. LET ME NOW HEAR THE PRIVATE ONES.

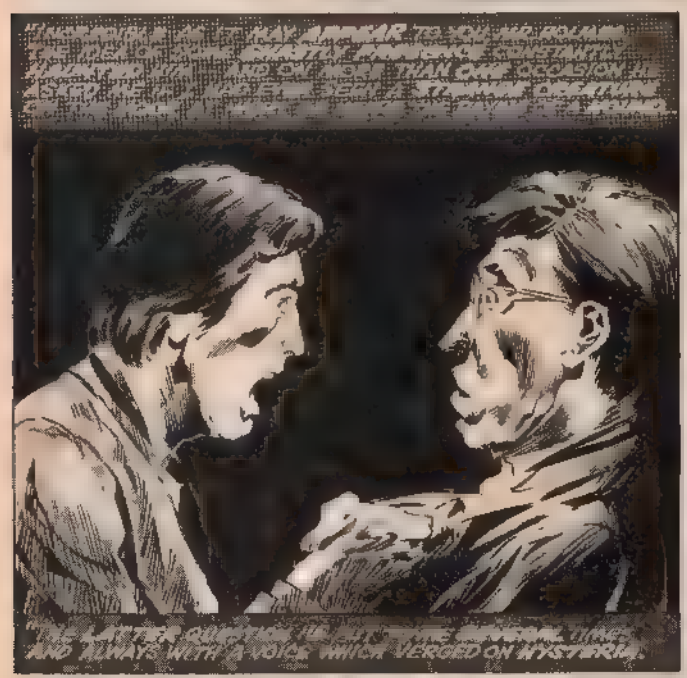

PLACING HIS FINGERTIPS TOGETHER, HOLMES LEANED BACK TO ASSUME HIS MOST IMPASSIVE AND JUDICIAL EXPRESSION...
IN DOING SO, MR. HOLMES, I WILL BE TELLING YOU THAT WHICH I HAVE NOT CONFIDED TO ANYONE.
MY MOTIVE FOR WITHHOLDING INFORMATION FROM THE CORONER'S JURY IS THAT A MAN OF SCIENCE SHRINKS FROM THE POSITION OF ENDORSING A POPULAR SUPERSTITION...

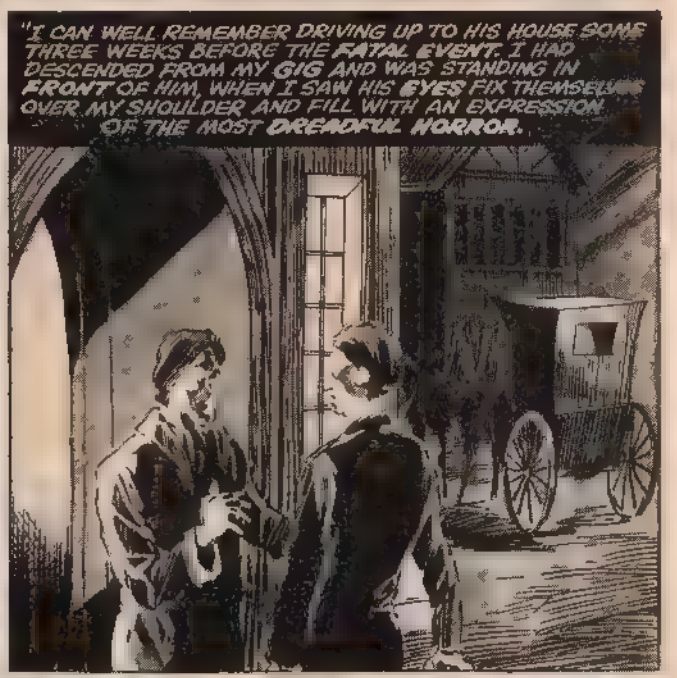

ALSO, AS THE ARTICLE SAYS, BASKERVILLE HALL WOULD CERTAINLY REMAIN UNTENANTED IF ANYTHING WERE TO INCREASE ITS ALREADY GRIM REPUTATION.
FOR BOTH THESE REASONS, I BELIEVED I WAS JUSTIFIED TO TELL LESS THAN I KNEW...

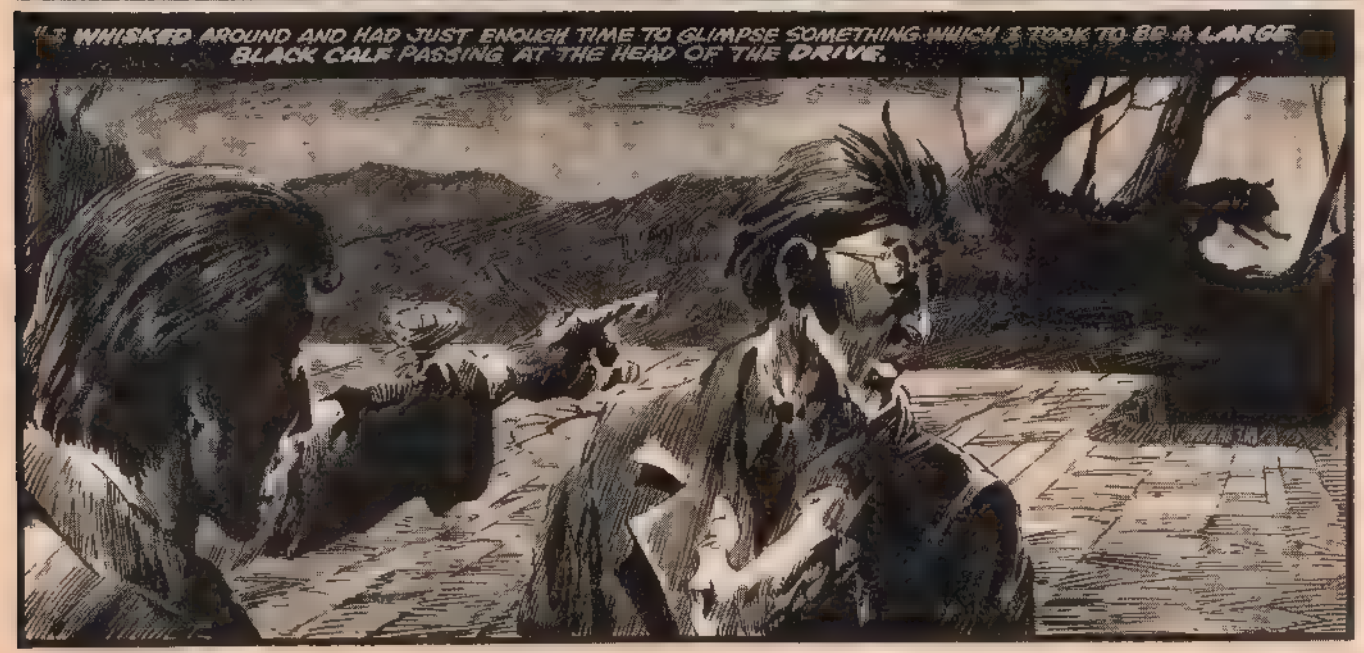

THE MOOR IS VERY SPARSELY INHABITED, AND WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MR. FRANKLIN OF LAFTER HALL AND MR. STAPLETON, THE NATURALIST, SIR CHARLES WAS THE ONLY OTHER MAN OF EDUCATION WITHIN MANY MILES...
...AND WHEN THE CHANCE OF HIS ILLNESS BROUGHT US TOGETHER, OUR COMMON INTERESTS IN SCIENCE KEPT US SO.


HE HAD BROUGHT BACK MUCH


"BUT IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS OF HIS LIFE, IT BECAME INCREASINGLY PLAIN TO ME THAT HIS NERVOUS SYSTEM WAS STRAINED TO THE BREAKING POINT.
"HE HAD TAKEN THIS STRANGE EXCESSIVE DISLIKE TO HIGHT... TO THE EXTENT THAT ALTHOUGH HE WOULD WALK HIS OWN GROUNDS, NOTHING COULD INDUCE HIM TO SET FOOT UPON THE MOOR AT NIGHT.

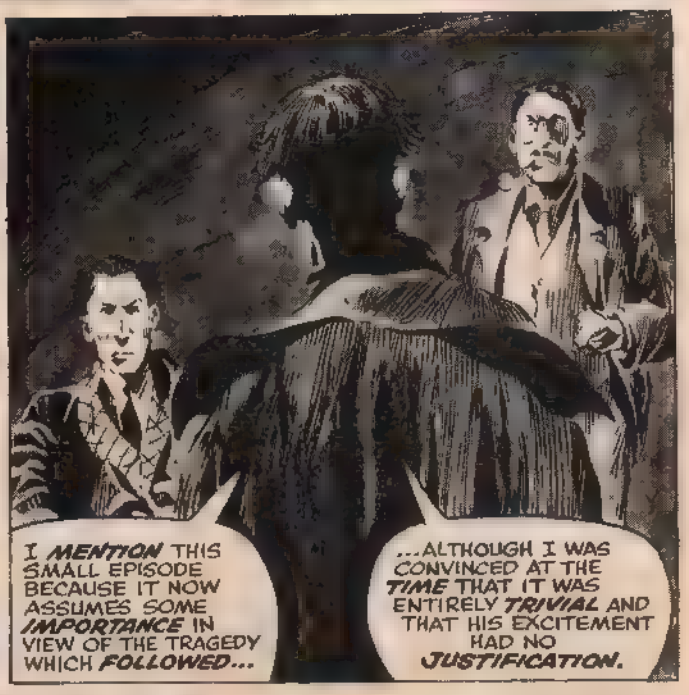

AND ALWAYS WITH A VOICE WHICH VERGED ON HYSTERIA.


"I CAN WELL REMEMBER DRIVING UP TO HIS HOUSE SOME THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE FATAL EVENT. I HAD DESCENDED FROM MY GIG AND WAS STANDING IN FRONT OF HIM, WHEN I SAW HIS EYES FIX THEMSELVES OVER MY SHOULDER AND FILL WITH AN EXPRESSION OF THE MOST DREADFUL HORROR.


"I WHISKED AROUND AND HAD JUST ENOUGH TIME TO GLIMPSE SOMETHING WHICH I TOOK TO BE A LARGE BLACK CALF PASSING AT THE HEAD OF THE DRIVE.

"SO EXCITED AND ALARMED WAS HE THAT I WAS COMPELLED TO SEARCH FOR THE ANIMAL.
"IT WAS GONE, HOWEVER, AND THE INCIDENT APPEARED TO MAKE THE WORST IMPRESSION ON HIS MIND...

"I STAYED WITH HIM ALL THE EVENING, AND IT WAS ON THIS OCCASION, TO EXPLAIN THE EMOTION HE HAD DISPLAYED, THAT HE CONFIDED TO MY KEEPING THE DOCUMENT I EARLIER READ TO YOU..."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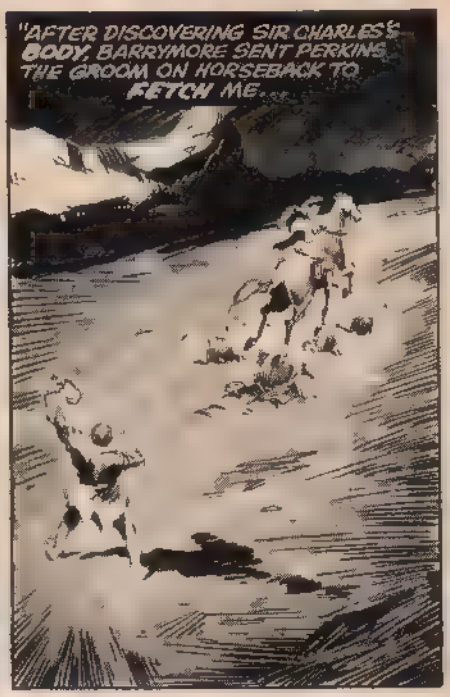
...ALTHOUGH I WAS CONVINCED AT THE TIME THAT IT WAS ENTIRELY TRIVIAL AND THAT HIS EXCITEMENT HAD NO JUSTIFICATION.

IT WAS ON MY ADVICE THAT SIR CHARLES WAS ABOUT TO GO TO LONDON. HOWEVER CHIMERICAL THE CAUSE OF HIS ANXIETY MIGHT BE, I KNEW IT WAS HAVING A SERIOUS AFFECT UPON HIS HEALTH--AND BELIEVED THAT A FEW MONTHS AMONG THE DISTRACTIONS OF TOWN WOULD SEND HIM BACK A NEW MAN.
MR. STAPLETON, A MUTUAL FRIEND, WAS OF THE SAME OPINION... BUT AT THE LAST INSTANT CAME THE TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE.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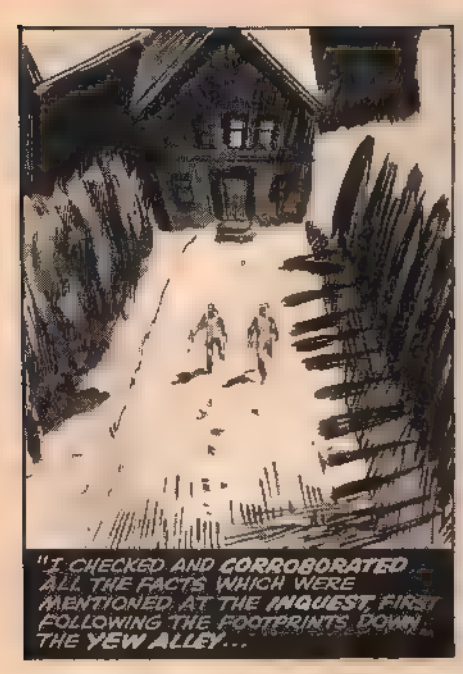
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"...THEN PAUSING AT THE MOOR-GATE WHERE HE SEEMED TO HAVE WAITED, NOTING THE CHANGE IN THE SHAPE OF HIS PRINTS AFTER THAT POINT...
"...AND OBSERVING THAT THERE WERE NO OTHER FOOTPRINTS ON THE SOFT GRAVEL, SAVE THOSE OF BARRYMORE.

"AND FINALLY, I CAREFULLY EXAMINED THE BODY, WHICH HAD NOT BEEN TOUCHED UNTIL MY ARRIVAL.
"SIR CHARLES LAY ON HIS FACE, HIS ARMS OUT, FINGERS DESPERATELY DUG INTO THE GROUND...

"...AND HIS FEATURES WERE CONVULSED TO SUCH SHOCKING EXTENT THAT I COULD HARDLY HAVE SWORN TO HIS IDENTITY.
"...CERTAINLY NO MEDICAL HUMAN OF ANY KIND...!

...BUT ONE FALSE STATEMENT WAS MADE BY BARRYMORE AT THE INQUEST. HE SAID THERE WERE NO TRACES ON THE GROUND AROUND THE BODY. PERHAPS HE DID NOT OBSERVE ANY...
...BUT I DID--SOME LITTLE DISTANCE OFF, BUT STILL FRESH AND CLEAR.
FOOTPRINTS--? MADE BY A MAN OR A WOMAN--?!

DR. MORTIMER LOOKED STRANGELY AT US FOR A MOMENT, AND HIS VOICE FELL ALMOST TO A WHISPER AS HE ANSWERED—
MR. HOLMES... THEY WERE THE FOOTPRINTS OF A GIGANTIC HOUND.

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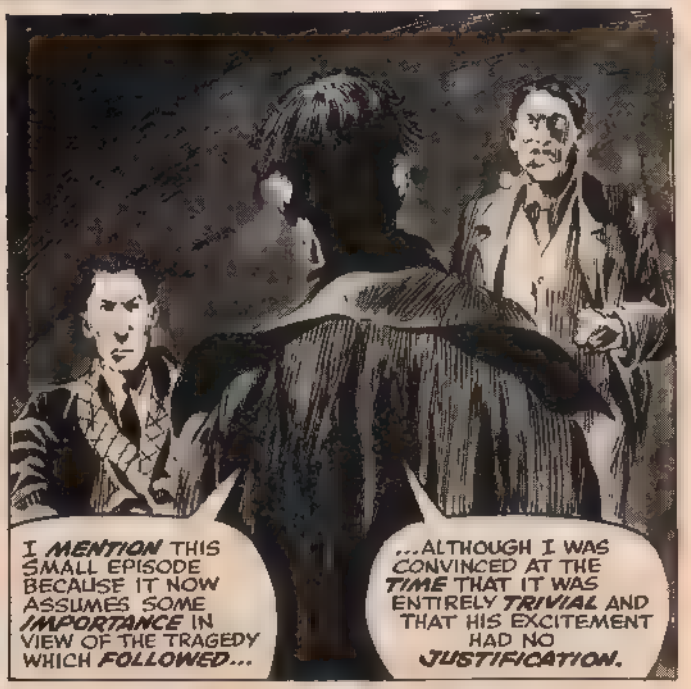
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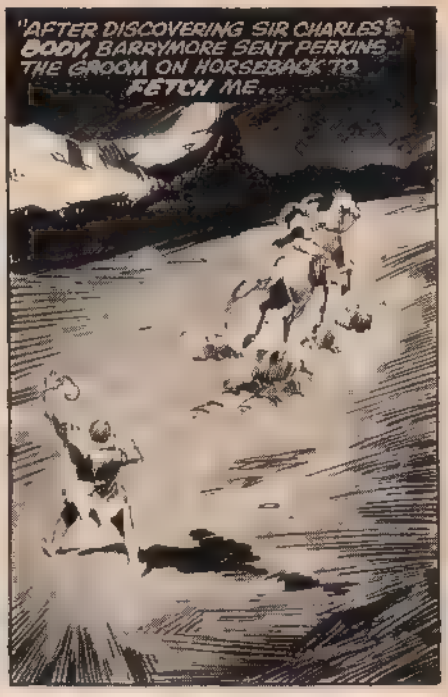
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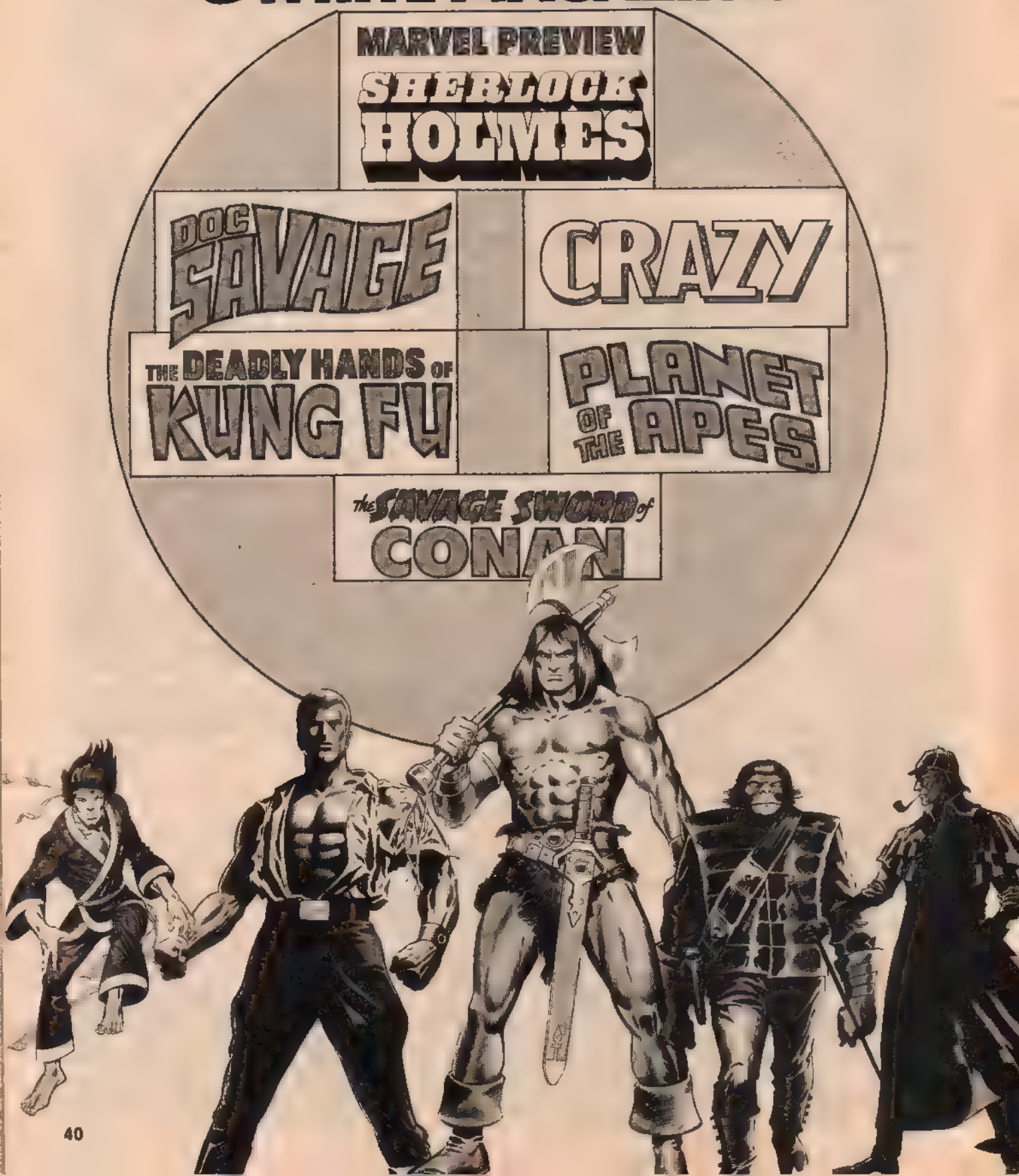
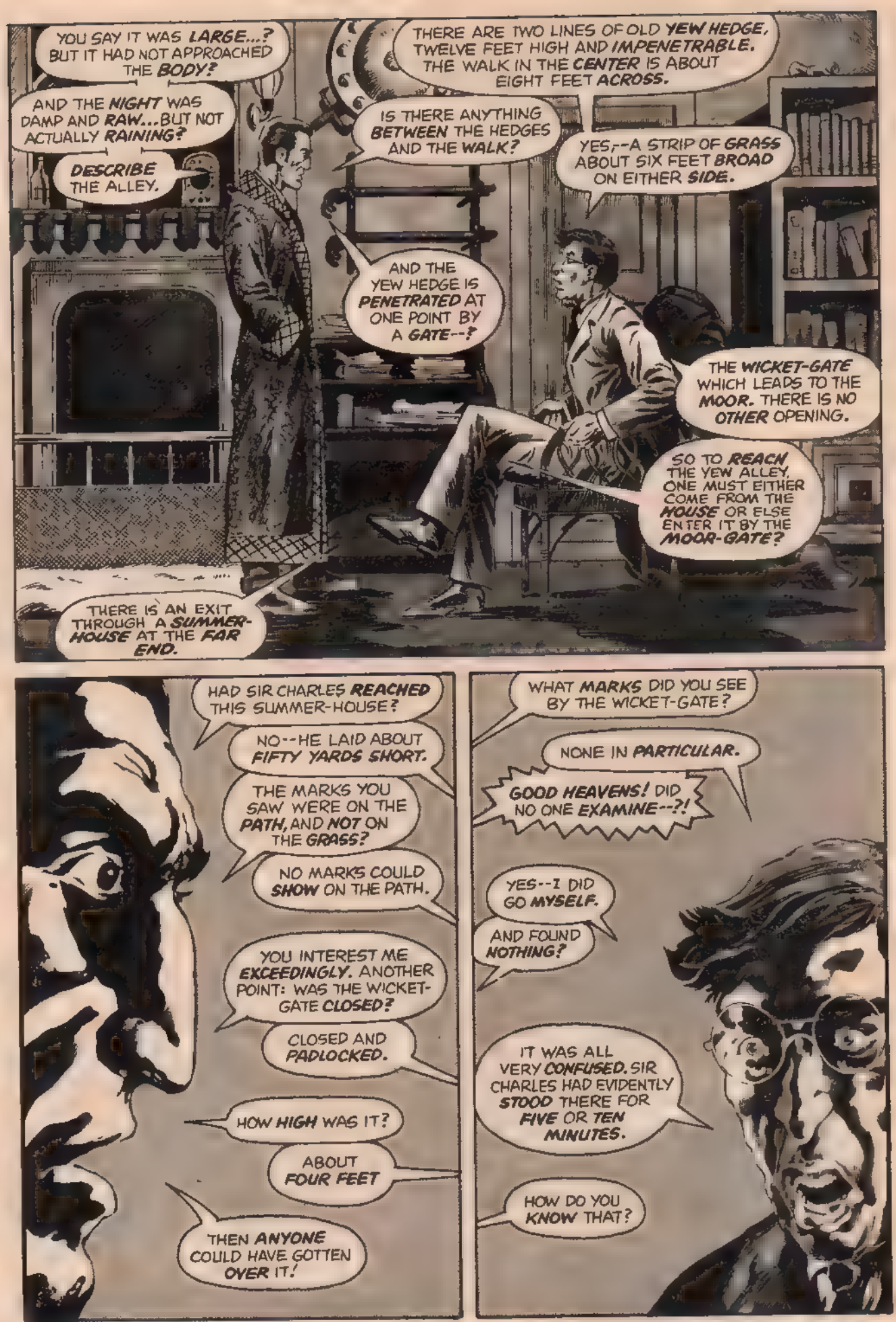
A WORLD OF EXCITEMENT... THE WORLD OF MARVEL BLACK & WHITE MAGAZINES



3. THE PROBLEM
I CONFESS THAT AT THESE WORDS A SHUDDER PASSED THROUGH ME. THERE WAS A THRILL IN THE DOCTOR'S VOICE WHICH SHOWED THAT HE WAS HIMSELF DEEPLY MOVED BY THAT WHICH HE TOLD US. HOLMES LEANED FORWARD WITH HIS EXCITEMENT, AND HIS EYES HAD THE HARD DRY GLITTER WHICH SHOT FROM THEM WHEN HE WAS KEENLY INTERESTED...
YOU SAW THIS?
AS CLEARLY AS I SEE YOU.
AND YOU SAID NOTHING?
WHAT WAS THE USE?
HOW WAS IT THAT NO ONE ELSE SAW THEM?
THE MARKS WERE SOME TWENTY YARDS FROM THE BODY, AND NO ONE GAVE THEM A THOUGHT-- NOR WOULD I, HAD I NOT KNOWN THE LEGEND.
THERE ARE MANY SHEEP-DOGS ON THE MOOR?
NO DOUBT, BUT THIS WAS NO SHEEP-DOG.


YOU SAY IT WAS LARGE...? BUT IT HAD NOT APPROACHED THE BODY?
AND THE NIGHT WAS DAMP AND RAW...BUT NOT ACTUALLY RAINING?
DESCRIBE THE ALLEY.
THERE ARE TWO LINES OF OLD YEW HEDGE, TWELVE FEET HIGH AND IMPENETRABLE. THE WALK IN THE CENTER IS ABOUT EIGHT FEET ACROSS.
IS THERE ANYTHING BETWEEN THE HEDGES AND THE WALK?
YES,--A STRIP OF GRASS ABOUT SIX FEET BROAD ON EITHER SIDE.
AND THE YEW HEDGE IS PENETRATED AT ONE POINT BY A GATE--?
THE WICKET-GATE WHICH LEADS TO THE MOOR. THERE IS NO OTHER OPENING.
SO TO REACH THE YEW ALLEY, ONE MUST EITHER COME FROM THE HOUSE OR ELSE ENTER IT BY THE MOOR-GATE?
THERE IS AN EXIT THROUGH A SUMMER-HOUSE AT THE FAR END.
HAD SIR CHARLES REACHED THIS SUMMER-HOUSE?
NO--HE LAID ABOUT FIFTY YARDS SHORT.
THE MARKS YOU SAW WERE ON THE PATH, AND NOT ON THE GRASS?
NO MARKS COULD SHOW ON THE PATH.
YOU INTEREST ME EXCEEDINGLY. ANOTHER POINT: WAS THE WICKET-GATE CLOSED?
CLOSED AND PADLOCKED.
HOW HIGH WAS IT?
ABOUT FOUR FEET
THEN ANYONE COULD HAVE GOTTEN OVER IT!
WHAT MARKS DID YOU SEE BY THE WICKET-GATE?
NONE IN PARTICULAR.
GOOD HEAVENS! DID NO ONE EXAMINE--?!
YES--I DID GO MYSELF.
AND FOUND NOTHING?
IT WAS ALL VERY CONFUSED. SIR CHARLES HAD EVIDENTLY STOOD THERE FOR FIVE OR TEN MINUTES.
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

BECAUSE THE ASH HAD DROPPED TWICE FROM HIS CIGAR.
EXCELLENT!
THIS IS A COLLEAGUE, WATSON -- A MAN AFTER OUR OWN HEARTS--!
BUT BESIDES THE ASH-- WERE THERE NO MARKS?
HE HAD LEFT HIS OWN MARKS ALL OVER THAT SMALL PATCH OF GRAVEL.
I COULD DISCERN NO OTHERS.
HOLMES STRUCK HIS HAND UPON HIS KNEE WITH ABRUPT FRUSTRATION.
IF I HAD ONLY BEEN THERE--!
IT IS MOST ASSUREDLY A CASE OF EXTRAORDINARY INTEREST--! AND ONE WHICH PRESENTED IMMENSE OPPORTUNITIES TO THE SCIENTIFIC EXPERT...!
THAT GRAVEL PAGE UPON WHICH I MIGHT HAVE READ SO MUCH HAS LONG ERE THIS MOMENT BEEN SMUDGED BY THE RAIN AND DEFACED BY THE CLOGS OF CURIOUS PEASANTS!

OH, DR. MORTIMER, DR. MORTIMER-- TO THINK THAT YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE CALLED ME IN!
YOU HAVE INDEED MUCH TO ANSWER FOR.
I COULD NOT CALL YOU IN, MR. HOLMES, WITHOUT DISCLOSING THESE FACTS TO THE WORLD -- AND I HAVE ALREADY GIVEN YOU MY REASONS FOR NOT WISHING TO DO SO...
BESIDES... I... I...
YES--?
WHY DO YOU HESITATE?
THERE IS A... A REALM... IN WHICH...
A REALM IN WHICH EVEN THE MOST ACUTE AND MOST EXPERIENCED OF DETECTIVES IS HELPLESS.
AND I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU SAY!
YOU MEAN THAT THING IS... SUPERNATURAL?
I DID NOT POSITIVELY SAY SO...
NO... BUT YOU EVIDENTLY THINK IT.
SINCE THE TRAGEDY, MR. HOLMES, I HAVE NOT KNOWN WHAT TO THINK.

YOU SEE, THERE HAVE NOW COME TO MY EARS SEVERAL INCIDENTS WHICH ARE DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE WITH THE SETTLED ORDER OF NATURE.
FOR EXAMPLE...?
WELL, JUST BEFORE THE TERRIBLE EVENT OF SIR CHARLES'S DEATH, SEVERAL PEOPLE HAD SEEN A CREATURE UPON THE MOOR WHICH CORRESPONDS WITH THIS BASKERVILLE DEMON...
...AND WHICH COULD NOT POSSIBLY HAVE BEEN ANY ANIMAL KNOWN TO SCIENCE.
THEY ALL AGREED THAT IT WAS A HUGE CREATURE...
...LUMINOUS... GHASTLY... AND SPECTRAL.
I HAVE CROSS-EXAMINED THESE MEN, ONE OF THEM A HARD-HEADED COUNTRY MAN, ONE A FARRIER, AND ONE A MOORLAND FARMER--
--WHO ALL TELL THE SAME STORY OF THIS DREADFUL APPARITION, EXACTLY CORRESPONDING TO THE HELL-HOUND OF THE LEGEND.
I ASSURE YOU THAT THERE IS A REIGN OF TERROR IN THAT DISTRICT--AND THAT IT IS A HARDY MAN INDEED WHO WILL CROSS THE MOOR AT NIGHT.
AND YOU-- A TRAINED MAN OF SCIENCE-- BELIEVE THE REASON TO BE SUPERNATURAL?

SIR, I HAVE HITHERTO CONFINED MY INVESTIGATIONS TO THIS WORLD. IN A MODEST WAY I HAVE COMBATTED EVIL--BUT TO TAKE ON THE FATHER OF EVIL HIMSELF WOULD, PERHAPS, BE SOMEWHAT TOO AMBITIOUS A TASK...
AND YET YOU MUST ADMIT THAT YOUR HOUND'S FOOT-PRINT WAS A THING OF SUB-STANCE AND REALITY...
THE ORIGINAL HOUND WAS REAL AND SUBSTANTIAL ENOUGH TO RIP A MAN'S THROAT OUT--AND YET DIABOLICAL, AS WELL!
I NOW SEE THAT YOU HAVE QUITE GONE OVER TO THE SUPER-NATURALISTS' SIDE. BUT TELL ME THIS, DR. MORTIMER--IF YOU HOLD THESE VIEWS, WHY HAVE YOU COME TO CONSULT ME AT ALL?
IN THE SAME BREATH, YOU TELL ME THAT IT IS USELESS TO INVESTIGATE SIR CHARLES'S DEATH, AND THAT YOU DESIRE ME TO DO IT.
I DID NOT SAY THAT I DESIRED YOU TO DO IT.
OH? THEN IN WHAT MANNER CAN I ASSIST YOU?
BY ADVISING ME AS TO WHAT I SHOULD DO WITH SIR HENRY BASKERVILLE, WHO ARRIVES AT WATERLOO STATION--
--IN EXACTLY... ONE HOUR AND A QUARTER.
HE BEING THE HEIR.
YES--OUR INQUIRIES FOUND THAT HE HAD BEEN FARMING IN CANADA. FROM ALL ACCOUNTS, HE SEEMS TO BE AN EXCELLENT FELLOW IN EVERY WAY.
AND I SPEAK NOW, NOT AS A MEDICAL MAN, BUT AS TRUSTEE AND EXECUTOR OF SIR CHARLES'S WILL.
THERE IS NO OTHER CLAIMANT, I PRESUME?
NONE. THE ONLY OTHER KINSMAN WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TRACE WAS RODGER BASKERVILLE, THE YOUNGEST OF THREE BROTHERS OF WHOM POOR SIR CHARLES WAS THE ELDER. THE SECOND BROTHER, WHO DIED YOUNG, IS THE FATHER OF THIS LAD HENRY.
THE THIRD--RODGER--WAS THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE FAMILY...

HE CAME OF THE OLD BASKERVILLE STRAIN AND WAS THE VERY IMAGE, THEY TELL ME, OF THE FAMILY PORTRAIT OF OLD HUGO. HE MADE ENGLAND TOO HOT TO HOLD HIM, FLED TO CENTRAL AMERICA, AND DIED THERE IN 1876 OF YELLOW FEVER
SO HENRY IS THE VERY LAST OF THE BASKERVILLES...
I HAVE HAD A WIRE THAT HE ARRIVED AT SOUTHAMPTON THIS MORNING, AND SINCE I MUST MEET HIM AT WATERLOO STATION IN ONE HOUR AND TEN MINUTES--
--WHAT WOULD YOU ADVISE ME TO DO WITH HIM, MR. HOLMES?
WHY SHOULD HE NOT GO TO THE HOME OF HIS FATHERS?
IT SEEMS NATURAL. DOES IT NOT? AND YET, CONSIDER THAT EVERY BASKERVILLE WHO GOES THERE MEETS WITH AN EVIL FATE.
I FEEL SURE THAT SIR CHARLES WOULD HAVE WARNED ME AGAINST BRINGING THIS--THE LAST OF THE OLD RACE AND HEIR TO GREAT WEALTH--TO THAT DEADLY PLACE.
AND YET IT CANNOT BE DENIED THAT THE PROSPERITY OF THE WHOLE POOR, BLEAK COUNTRYSIDE DEPENDS UPON HIS PRESENCE. ALL THE GOOD WORK BEGUN BY SIR CHARLES WILL CRASH TO THE GROUND IF THERE IS NO TENANT IN THE HALL.
I DO NOT WISH TO BE SWAYED BY MY OWN OBVIOUS INTEREST IN THE MATTER... AND THAT IS WHY I BRING THE CASE BEFORE YOU.
HOLMES CONSIDERED FOR A LITTLE TIME BEFORE SPEAKING...
PUT PLAINLY, THE MATTER IS THIS: IN YOUR OPINION THERE IS A DIABOLICAL AGENCY WHICH MAKES DARTMOOR AN UNSAFE ABODE FOR A BASKERVILLE. THAT IS YOUR OPINION...?
I WOULD SAY AT LEAST THAT THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THIS MAY BE SO...
EXACTLY. BUT IF YOUR SUPERNATURAL THEORY IS CORRECT, SURELY IT COULD BRING EVIL TO THE YOUNG MAN IN LONDON AS EASILY AS IN DEVONSHIRE.
A DEVIL WITH MERELY THE LOCAL POWERS OF A PARISH VESTRY IS TOO INCONCEIVABLE A THING.
YOU PUT THE MATTER MORE FLIPPANTLY, MR. HOLMES, THAN YOU MIGHT IF YOU WERE BROUGHT INTO PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THESE THINGS.

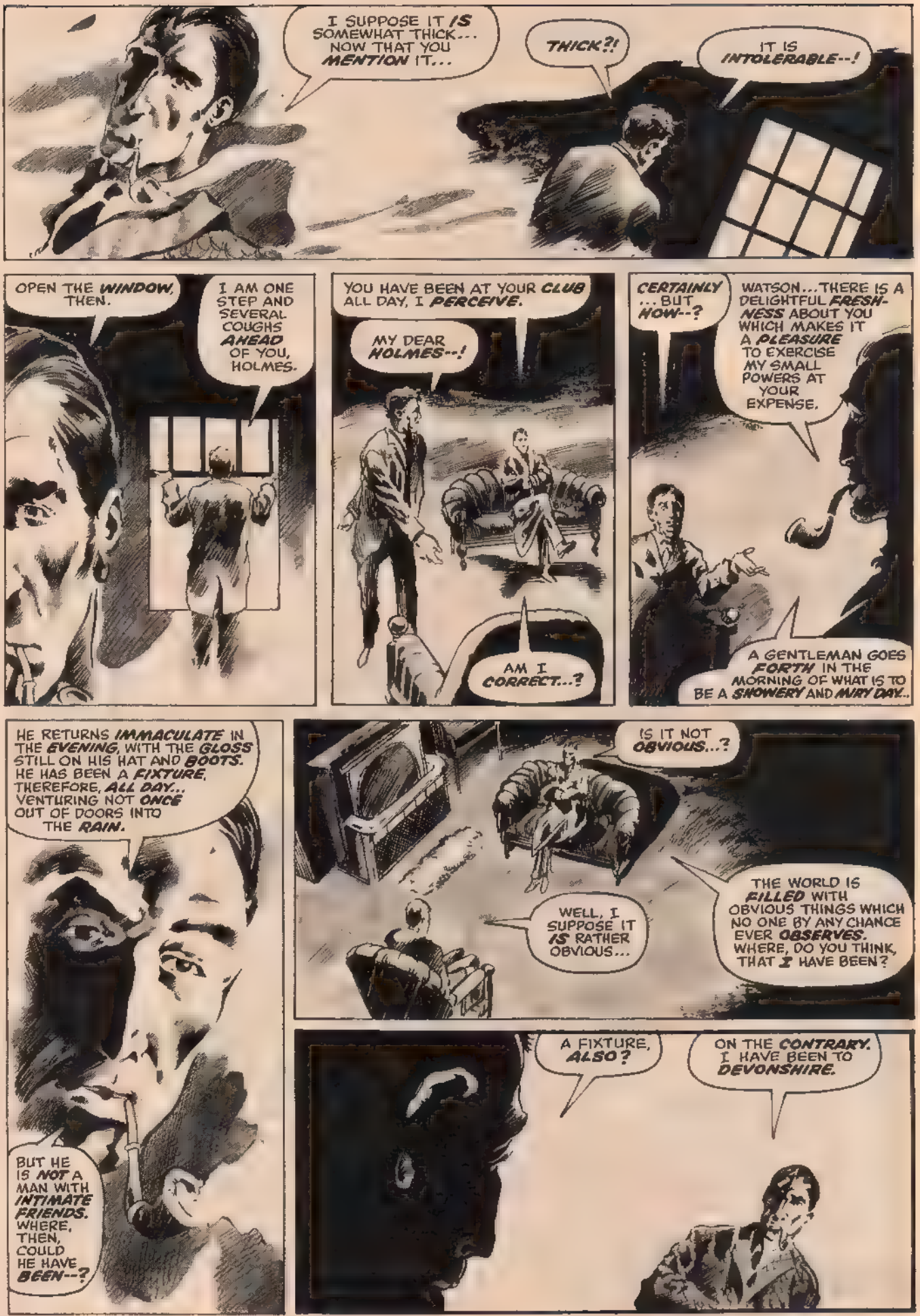
YOUR ADVICE, THEN-- AS I UNDERSTAND IT-- IS THAT THE YOUNG MAN WILL BE AS SAFE IN DEVONSHIRE AS IN LONDON?
HE COMES IN SOME FIFTY-EIGHT MINUTES. WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND?
I RECOMMEND, SIR, THAT YOU CATCH A CAB, CALL OFF YOUR SPANIEL-- WHO IS SCRATCHING AT MY FRONT DOOR-- AND PROCEED TO WATERLOO TO MEET SIR HENRY BASKERVILLE.
AND THEN...?
AND THEN YOU WILL SAY NOTHING TO HIM AT ALL UNTIL I HAVE MADE UP MY MIND ABOUT THE MATTER.
HOW LONG WILL THAT TAKE?
TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. AT TEN O'CLOCK TOMORROW, I WILL BE MUCH OBLIGED IF YOU WILL CALL UPON ME HERE. AND IT WILL BE OF HELP TO ME IN MY PLANS FOR THE FUTURE IF YOU WILL BRING SIR HENRY BASKERVILLE WITH YOU.
I WILL DO SO, MR. HOLMES
HE SCRIBBLED THE APPOINTMENT ON HIS SHIRT-CUFF...
...AND HURRIED OFF IN HIS STRANGE, PEERING, ABSENT-MINDED FASHION.
ALMOST AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, HOLMES STROLLED OUT INTO THE HALL TO STOP HIM ON THE STAIRS...
ONE MORE QUESTION, DR. MORTIMER. YOU SAY THAT SEVERAL PEOPLE SAW THIS APPARITION ON THE MOOR PRIOR TO SIR CHARLES'S DEATH...
THREE PEOPLE DID, YES.
DID ANY SEE IT AFTER THE DEATH?
I HAVE NOT HEARD OF ANY...
THANK YOU, GOOD MORNING.

HOLMES THEN RETURNED TO HIS SEAT WITH THAT QUIET LOOK OF SATISFACTION WHICH MEANT THAT HE ANTICIPATED A CONGENIAL TASK BEFORE HIM.
...AND THAT HE WOULD THEREFORE WISH TO BE ALONE.
GOING OUT, WATSON?
UNLESS I CAN HELP YOU.
NO, MY DEAR FELLOW, IT IS AT THE HOUR OF ACTION THAT I TURN TO YOU FOR INVALUABLE AID...
...BUT WHEN YOU PASS BRADLEY'S, WOULD YOU ASK HIM TO SEND UP A POUND OF HIS STRONGEST SNAG TOBACCO?
AND IT WOULD BE JUST AS WELL IF YOU COULD MAKE IT CONVENIENT NOT TO RETURN BEFORE EVENING...
AT THAT TIME, I SHOULD BE VERY GLAD TO COMPARE IMPRESSIONS WITH YOU ON THIS MOST SPLENDID AND UNIQUE PROBLEM WHICH HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO US.
VERY WELL, HOLMES. I WISH YOU LUCK.
I KNEW THAT SECLUSION AND SOLITUDE WERE VERY NECESSARY TO MY FRIEND IN THOSE LONG HOURS OF MENTAL CONCENTRATION...
THEY WERE TIMES DURING WHICH HE WOULD WEIGH EVERY MINUTE PARTICLE OF EVIDENCE...
...CONSTRUCT ALTERNATIVE THEORIES BALANCING ONE AGAINST THE OTHER...

...UNTIL HIS MIND WAS MADE UP AS TO WHICH POINTS WERE ESSENTIAL AND WHICH WERE IMMATERIAL.
ONLY THEN WOULD ACTION FOLLOW!
YOU SEE IT, WATSON...? YOU SEE IT?!
HOLMES! W-WHAT...?
THE BAND! THE SPECKLED BAND!
SUCH ACTION MIGHT PLUNGE US INTO CIRCUMSTANCES QUITE BIZARRE... EVEN HORRENDOUS. IT MOST DEFINITELY DID IN THE INFAMOUS "ADVENTURE OF THE SPECKLED BAND"...*
...AND ALL THAT DR. MORTIMER HAD HINTED AT SEEMED TO PORTEND EVENTS EVEN MORE MACABRE THAN THAT GRISLY AFFAIR!

*CHRONICLED IN "THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES," AND--PERHAPS SOMEDAY--IN THESE PAGES. ARCHIE.

FOR THE PRESENT HOWEVER NOTHING WOULD TRANSPIRE UNTIL HOLMES' SOLITARY MUSINGS ENDED...
I THEREFORE SPENT THE DAY IN THE STAID COMFORT OF MY CLUB...
...AND IT WAS NOT UNTIL EVENING THAT I MADE MY WAY BACK DOWN BAKER STREET.
IT WAS NEARLY NINE O'CLOCK WHEN I FOUND MYSELF ENTERING THE SITTING ROOM ONCE AGAIN...
MY FIRST IMPRESSION AS I OPENED THE DOOR WAS THAT A FIRE HAD BROKEN OUT...
...FOR THE ROOM WAS SO FILLED WITH DENSE SMOKE THAT THE LIGHT OF THE LAMP UPON THE TABLE WAS BLURRED BY IT.
AS I ENTERED, HOWEVER, MY FEARS WERE ASSUAGED, FOR IT WAS THE ACRID FUMES OF STRONG, HARSH TOBACCO WHICH SEIZED ME BY THE THROAT AND SET ME HELPLESSLY COUGHING...
THROUGH THE MAZE I HAD A VAGUE VISION OF HOLMES IN HIS DRESSING GOWN, COILED UP IN THE ARMCHAIR WITH HIS BRIAR-ROOT PIPE BETWEEN HIS LIPS. SEVERAL ROLLS OF PAPER LAY AROUND HIM...
CAUGHT COLD, WATSON?
NO-- IT'S THIS POISONOUS ATMOSPHERE WHICH HAS SET MY LUNGS TO VIOLENT PROTEST--!


I SUPPOSE IT IS SOMEWHAT THICK... NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
THICK?!
IT IS INTOLERABLE--!
OPEN THE WINDOW, THEN.
I AM ONE STEP AND SEVERAL COUGHS AHEAD OF YOU, HOLMES.
YOU HAVE BEEN AT YOUR CLUB ALL DAY, I PERCEIVE.
MY DEAR HOLMES--!
AM I CORRECT...?
CERTAINLY ...BUT HOW--?
WATSON...THERE IS A DELIGHTFUL FRESHNESS ABOUT YOU WHICH MAKES IT A PLEASURE TO EXERCISE MY SMALL POWERS AT YOUR EXPENSE.
A GENTLEMAN GOES FORTH IN THE MORNING OF WHAT IS TO BE A SHOWERY AND MIRY DAY..
HE RETURNS IMMACULATE IN THE EVENING, WITH THE GLOSS STILL ON HIS HAT AND BOOTS. HE HAS BEEN A FIXTURE, THEREFORE, ALL DAY.. VENTURING NOT ONCE OUT OF DOORS INTO THE RAIN.
BUT HE IS NOT A MAN WITH INTIMATE FRIENDS. WHERE, THEN, COULD HE HAVE BEEN--?
IS IT NOT OBVIOUS...?
WELL, I SUPPOSE IT IS RATHER OBVIOUS...
THE WORLD IS FILLED WITH OBVIOUS THINGS WHICH NO ONE BY ANY CHANCE EVER OBSERVES. WHERE, DO YOU THINK, THAT I HAVE BEEN?
A FIXTURE, ALSO?
ON THE CONTRARY. I HAVE BEEN TO DEVONSHIRE.

IN SPIRIT?
EXACTLY. MY BODY HAS REMAINED IN THIS ARMCHAIR, AND HAS-- I NOW REGRET TO OBSERVE-- CONSUMED IN MY ABSENCE TWO LARGE POTS OF BLACK COFFEE AND AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF TOBACCO.
AFTER YOU LEFT, I SENT DOWN TO STANFORD'S FOR THE ORDNANCE MAP OF THE APPROPRIATE PORTION OF THE MOOR, AND MY SPIRIT HAS HOVERED ABOVE IT ALL DAY...
I FLATTER MYSELF THAT I COULD FIND MY WAY ABOUT.
A LARGE-SCALE MAP, I PRESUME?
EXTREMELY LARGE. HERE YOU HAVE THE PARTICULAR DISTRICT WHICH CONCERNS US.
THAT IS BASKERVILLE HALL IN THE MIDDLE.
WITH A WOOD AROUND IT?
YES, ON THE ONE SIDE. I FANCY THE YEW ALLEY, THOUGH NOT MARKED UNDER THAT NAME, MUST STRETCH ALONG THIS LINE-- WITH THE MOOR ON THE RIGHT OF IT...
THIS SMALL CLUMP OF BUILDINGS HERE IS THE HAMLET OF GRIMPEN, WHERE OUR FRIEND DR. MORTIMER HAS HIS HEADQUARTERS..
AND WITHIN A RADIUS OF FIVE MILES, AS YOU SEE, THERE ARE ONLY A FEW SCATTERED DWELLINGS-- LAFTER HALL ...AND HERE, THE PROBABLE RESIDENCE OF THE NATURALIST STAPLETON,..TWO MOORLAND FARMHOUSES, HIGH TOR AND FOULMIRE...
THEN, FOURTEEN MILES AWAY, THE GREAT CONVICT PRISON OF PRINCETOWN.
THIS, THEN, IS THE STAGE UPON WHICH TRAGEDY HAS BEEN PLAYED, AND UPON WHICH WE MAY HELP TO PLAY IT AGAIN.
»MUST BE A WILD PLACE...
YES, THE SETTING IS A WORTHY ONE. IF EVER THE DEVIL DID DESIRE TO HAVE A HAND IN THE AFFAIRS OF MEN...
THEN YOU ARE NOW INCLINING TO THE SUPERNATURAL EXPLANATION..?

THE DEVIL'S AGENTS MAY BE OF FLESH AND BLOOD, WATSON.
BUT NOW, THERE ARE TWO QUESTIONS AWAITING US AT THE OUTSET. FIRST, HAS ANY CRIME BEEN COMMITTED AT ALL?
AND SECOND, WHAT IS THAT CRIME-- IF ANY-- AND HOW WAS IT COMMITTED?
OF COURSE IF DR. MORTIMER'S SUPERNATURAL SURMISE SHOULD BE CORRECT, THERE IS THE END OF OUR INVESTIGATION... AND PERHAPS OUR LIVES AS WELL.
BUT IT IS INCUMBENT UPON US TO EXHAUST ALL OTHER HYPOTHESES BEFORE FALLING BACK ON THE SUPERNATURAL...
I THINK WE'LL SHUT THAT WINDOW AGAIN, WATSON. IF YOU DON'T MIND.
IT IS A SINGULAR CONVICTION, BUT I FIND THAT A CONCENTRATED ATMOSPHERE ENCOURAGES A CONCENTRATION OF THOUGHT...
I HAVE NOT YET PUSHED THE CONVICTION TO THE POINT OF GETTING INTO A BOX TO THINK...
...BUT THAT IS THE LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE, I SHOULD IMAGINE...
HAVE YOU TURNED THE CASE OVER IN YOUR MIND?
YES-- I HAVE THOUGHT A GOOD DEAL OF IT IN THE COURSE OF THE DAY...
AND WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT?
BEWILDERING.
YES, IT CERTAINLY HAS A CHARACTER OF ITS OWN. THERE ARE POINTS OF DISTINCTION TO IT-- SUCH AS THAT CHANGE IN THE FOOTPRINTS, FOR EXAMPLE...
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THAT, WATSON?

MORTIMER SAID THAT THE MAN HAD WALKED ON TIPTOE DOWN THAT PORTION OF THE ALLEY...
MORTIMER ONLY REPEATED WHAT SOME FOOL HAD SAID AT THE INQUEST.
REALLY, WATSON--! WHY SHOULD A GROWN MAN WALK ON TIPTOE DOWN A HEDGE ALLEY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT!
WHAT THEN?
HE WAS RUNNING, WATSON -- RUNNING DESPERATELY, RUNNING FOR HIS DEAR LIFE--!
RUNNING UNTIL HE BURST HIS HEART AND FELL DEAD UPON HIS FACE.
RUNNING FROM WHAT?
THERE LIES OUR PROBLEM.
BUT THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE MAN WAS CRAZED WITH FEAR BEFORE HE EVEN BEGAN TO RUN.
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?
I AM PRESUMING THAT THE CAUSE OF HIS FEARS CAME TO HIM ACROSS THE MOOR. IF THAT WERE SO -- AND IT SEEMS PROBABLE -- ONLY A MAN WHO HAD LOST HIS WITS WOULD RUN FROM THE HOUSE INSTEAD OF TOWARD IT.
IF THE GYPSY'S EVIDENCE MAY BE TAKEN AS TRUE, HE RAN WITH CRIES FOR HELP IN THE DIRECTION WHERE HELP WAS LEAST LIKELY TO BE -- TOWARD THE SUMMER HOUSE.

THEN AGAIN, WHOM WAS HE WAITING FOR THAT NIGHT-- AND WHY WAS HE WAITING FOR HIM IN THE YEW ALLEY RATHER THAN HIS OWN HOUSE?
YOU THINK HE WAS WAITING FOR SOMEONE?
THE MAN WAS ELDERLY AND INFIRM.
WE CAN UNDER-STAND HIS TAKING AN EVENING STROLL-- BUT THE GROUND WAS DAMP, AND THE NIGHT INCLEMENT..
IS IT NATURAL THAT HE SHOULD STAND FOR FIVE OR TEN MINUTES-- AS DR MORTIMER, WITH MORE PRACTICAL SENSE THAN I HAD CREDITED HIM-- DEDUCED FROM THE CIGAR ASH?
BUT HE WENT OUT EVERY EVENING.
I THINK IT UNLIKELY THAT HE WAITED AT THE MOOR-GATE EVERY EVENING. ON THE CONTRARY, THE EVIDENCE IS THAT HE AVOIDED THE MOOR. BUT THAT NIGHT, HE WAITED THERE...
IT WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE HE WAS TO TAKE HIS DEPARTURE FOR LONDON. YES... THE THING TAKES SHAPE, WATSON...
MIGHT I ASK YOU TO HAND ME MY VIOLIN...?
I THINK WE SHALL POSTPONE ALL FURTHER THOUGHT UPON THIS BUSINESS UNTIL THE MORNING, WHEN WE HAVE HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF MEETING WITH DR. MORTIMER...
...AND SIR HENRY BASKERVILLE.

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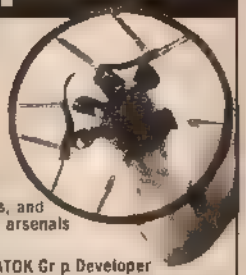

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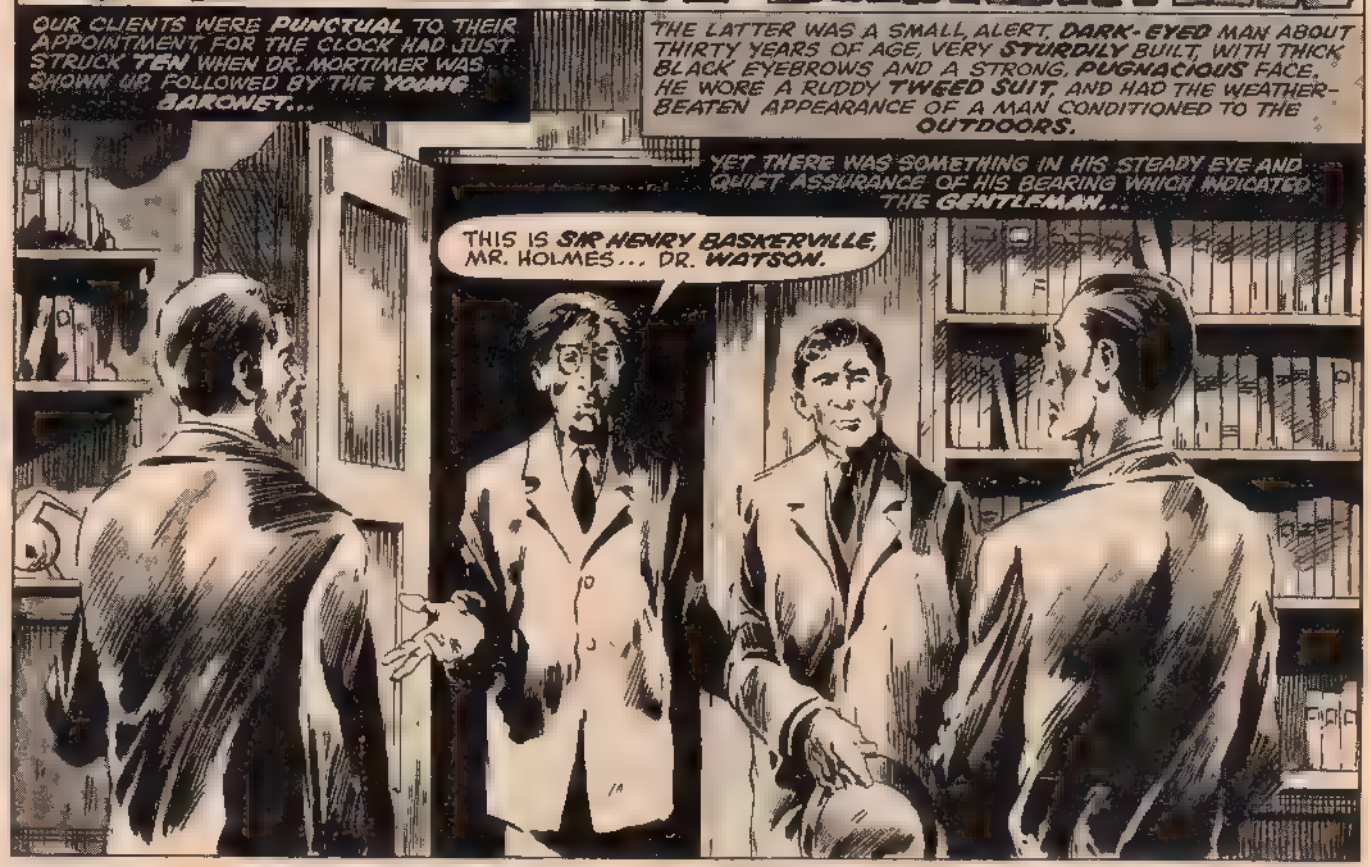

OUR CLIENTS WERE PUNCTUAL TO THEIR APPOINTMENT, FOR THE CLOCK HAD JUST STRUCK TEN WHEN DR. MORTIMER WAS SHOWN UP, FOLLOWED BY THE YOUNG BARONET...
THE LATTER WAS A SMALL, ALERT, DARK-EYED MAN ABOUT THIRTY YEARS OF AGE, VERY STURDILY BUILT, WITH THICK BLACK EYEBROWS AND A STRONG, PUGNACIOUS FACE. HE WORE A RUDDY TWEED SUIT, AND HAD THE WEATHER-BEATEN APPEARANCE OF A MAN CONDITIONED TO THE OUTDOORS.
YET THERE WAS SOMETHING IN HIS STEADY EYE AND QUIET ASSURANCE OF HIS BEARING WHICH INDICATED THE GENTLEMAN...
THIS IS SIR HENRY BASKERVILLE, MR. HOLMES... DR. WATSON.

WHY, YES... AND THE STRANGE THING IS, MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES, THAT IF MY FRIEND HERE HAD NOT PROPOSED COMING TO YOU THIS MORNING, I WOULD HAVE COME ON MY OWN.

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU THINK OUT LITTLE PUZZLES-- AND I'VE HAD ONE THIS MORNING WHICH WANTS MORE THINKING OUT THAN I'M ABLE TO GIVE IT.
PRAY TAKE A SEAT, SIR HENRY...

NOW, DO I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU HAVE HAD SOME REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE SINCE ARRIVING IN LONDON?
NOTHING OF MUCH IMPORTANCE, MR HOLMES ...MERELY A JOKE, AS LIKE AS NOT...
IT WAS THIS LETTER-- IF YOU CAN CALL IT A LETTER --WHICH REACHED ME THIS MORNING.
HE LAID AN ENVELOPE ON THE TABLE AND WE ALL BENT OVER IT. OF COMMON QUALITY, IT WAS GREYISH IN COLOUR, WITH THE ADDRESS PRINTED IN A CRUDE HAND...
WHO KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO THE NORTHUMBERLAND HOTEL?
THAT'S THE PUZZLE, MR. HOLMES. NO ONE COULD HAVE KNOWN...
WE ONLY DECIDED ON THE HOTEL AFTER I MET DR. MORTIMER.
BUT DR. MORTIMER WAS, NO DOUBT, ALREADY STAYING THERE?
NO--I HAD BEEN STAYING WITH A FRIEND.
THERE WAS NO POSSIBLE INDICATION THAT WE INTENDED TO GO TO THAT HOTEL.
HMN. SOMEONE SEEMS TO BE VERY DEEPLY INTERESTED IN YOUR MOVEMENTS, SIR HENRY...
OUT OF THE ENVELOPE HOLMES TOOK A HALF-SHEET OF FOOLSCAP PAPER FOLDED INTO FOUR...
THIS HE OPENED AND SPREAD FLAT UPON THE TABLE. ACROSS THE MIDDLE OF IT A SINGLE SENTENCE HAD BEEN FORMED BY THE EXPEDIENT OF PASTING PRINTED WORDS UPON IT...
as You value your life or reason keep away from the MOOR
ONLY THE WORD "MOOR" WAS PRINTED IN INK.

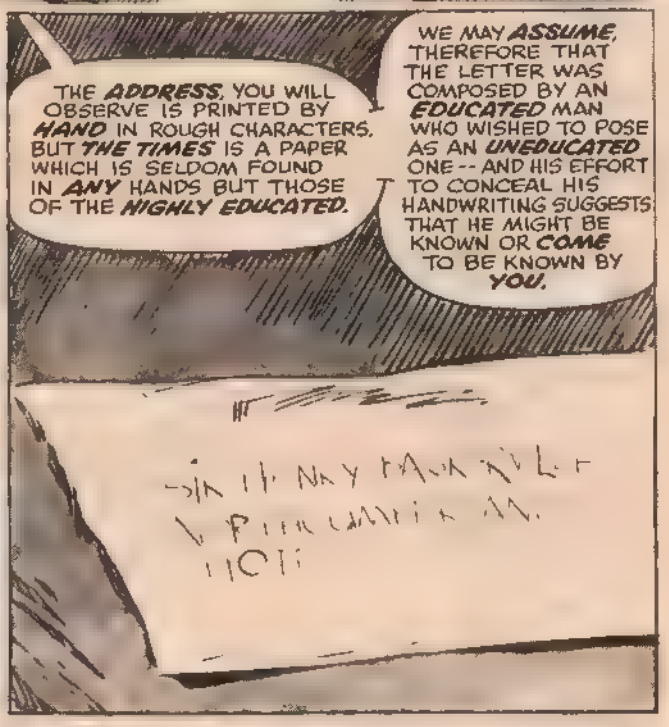
NOW PERHAPS YOU WILL TELL ME, MR. HOLMES, WHAT IN THUNDER IS THE MEANING OF THAT-- AND WHO IS IT THAT TAKES SO MUCH INTEREST IN MY AFFAIRS--?
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, DR. MORTIMER? YOU MUST CONCEDE THAT THERE IS NOTHING SUPER-NATURAL ABOUT THIS, AT ANY RATE?
NO, SIR-- BUT IT MIGHT VERY WELL COME FROM SOMEONE WHO WAS CONVINCED THAT THE BUSINESS IS SUPERNATURAL.
WHAT BUSINESS? IT SEEMS TO ME THAT YOU GENTLEMEN KNOW A GREAT DEAL MORE ABOUT MY AFFAIRS THAN I DO--!
YOU SHALL SHARE OUR KNOWLEDGE BEFORE YOU LEAVE THIS ROOM, SIR HENRY --I PROMISE YOU THAT.
BUT WITH YOUR PERMISSION, WE WILL CONFINE OURSELVES FOR THE PRESENT TO THIS VERY INTERESTING DOCUMENT, WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN PUT TOGETHER AND POSTED YESTERDAY EVENING...
HAVE YOU YESTERDAY'S TIMES, WATSON--?
IT'S OVER IN THE CORNER, HOLMES.
MIGHT I TROUBLE YOU FOR IT, GOOD FELLOW--? THE INSIDE PAGE, PLEASE --WITH THE LEADING ARTICLES...
ACCEPTING THE REQUESTED PORTION OF THE PAPER, HE GLANCED SWIFTLY OVER IT, RUNNING HIS EYES UP AND DOWN THE COLUMNS...
CAPITAL ARTICLE, THIS, ON FREE TRADE. PERMIT ME TO READ YOU AN EXTRACT FROM IT...
"YOU MAY BE CAJOLED INTO IMAGINING THAT YOUR OWN INDUSTRY WILL BE ENCOURAGED BY A PROTECTIVE TARIFF, BUT IT STANDS TO REASON THAT SUCH LEGISLATION MUST IN THE LONG RUN KEEP AWAY WEALTH, FROM THE COUNTRY, DIMINISH THE VALUE OF OUR IMPORTS, AND LOWER THE GENERAL CONDITIONS OF LIFE IN THIS ISLAND."
HA-HAH! WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT, WATSON--? DON'T YOU THINK IT IS AN ADMIRABLE SENTIMENT?
I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE TARIFF AND THINGS OF THAT SORT, BUT IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE'VE GOTTEN A BIT OFF THE TRAIL SO FAR AS THE NOTE IS CONCERNED.

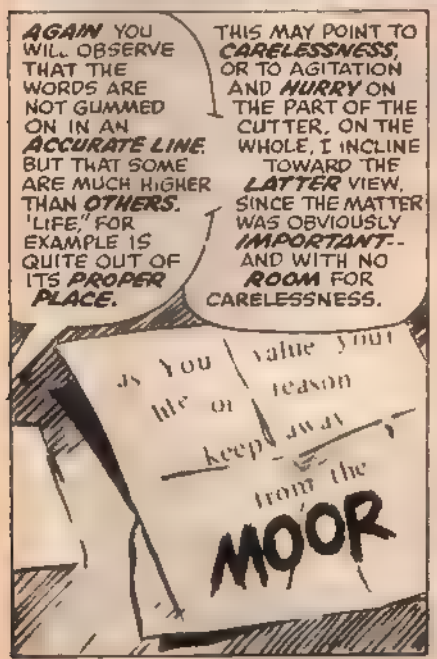
ON THE CONTRARY, I THINK WE ARE PARTICULARLY NOT UPON THE TRAIL, SIR HENRY.
WATSON HERE KNOWS MORE ABOUT MY METHODS THAN YOU DO -- BUT I FEAR THAT EVEN HE HAS NOT QUITE GRASPED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THAT QUOTED SENTENCE.
NO, I CONFESS THAT I SEE NO CONNECTION.
AND YET, MY DEAR WATSON, THERE IS SO CLOSE A CONNECTION THAT THE ONE IS EXTRACTED FROM THE OTHER. "YOU," "YOUR" "YOUR," "LIFE," "REASON," "VALUE," "KEEP AWAY," "FROM THE."
DON'T YOU SEE NOW FROM WHENCE THESE HAVE BEEN TAKEN?
BY THUNDER, YOU'RE RIGHT! THAT'S AMAZING--!
IF ANY POSSIBLE DOUBT REMAINED, IT IS OVERCOME BY THE FACT THAT "KEEP AWAY" AND "FROM THE" ARE EACH CUT OUT IN ONE PIECE.
WELL NOW -- SO IT IS!
REALLY, MR. HOLMES, THIS EXCEEDS ANYTHING I COULD HAVE IMAGINED...
I CAN UNDERSTAND HOW YOU KNEW THAT THE WORDS WERE CLIPPED FROM A NEWSPAPER, BUT THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW WHICH NEWSPAPER -- AND THAT THEY CAME FROM THE LEAD ARTICLE -- IS ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE THINGS I HAVE EVER KNOWN.
HOW DID YOU DO IT?
I PRESUME, DOCTOR, THAT YOU COULD TELL THE SKULL OF A NEGRO FROM THAT OF AN ESKIMO?
MOST CERTAINLY.
BUT HOW?
WELL... BECAUSE THAT IS MY SPECIAL HOBBY. THE DIFFERENCES ARE OBVIOUS... THE SUPRA-ORBITAL CREST, THE FACIAL ANGLE, THE MAXILLARY CURVE, THE --
BUT THIS IS MY SPECIAL HOBBY, DR. MORTIMER -- AND THE DIFFERENCES ARE EQUALLY OBVIOUS.

TO MY EYES, THERE IS AS MUCH DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LEADED BOURGEOIS TYPEFACE OF A TIMES ARTICLE AND THE SLOVENLY PRINT OF AN EVENING HALFPENNY PAPER AS THERE IS BETWEEN YOUR NEGRO AND ESKIMO.
THE DETECTION OF TYPEFACES IS ONE OF THE MOST ELEMENTARY BRANCHES OF KNOWLEDGE TO THE SPECIAL EXPERT IN CRIME...
...THOUGH I CONFESS THAT ONCE WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG I CONFUSED LEEDS MERCURY WITH THE WESTERN MORNING NEWS.
BUT A TIMES LEADER IS ENTIRELY DISTINCTIVE, AND THESE WORDS COULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN FROM NOTHING ELSE.
AS THE MESSAGE WAS ASSEMBLED YESTERDAY, THE STRONG PROBABILITY WAS THAT WE SHOULD FIND THE INDIVIDUAL WORDS IN YESTERDAY'S ISSUE.
SO FAR AS I CAN FOLLOW YOU, THEN, MR. HOLMES... SOMEONE CUT OUT THIS MESSAGE WITH A SCISSORS--
NAIL SCISSORS, SINCE THE BLADES HAD TO TAKE TWO SNIPS OVER "KEEP AWAY."
I SEE. SOMEONE, THEN, CUT OUT THE WORDS OF THE MESSAGE WITH A PAIR OF SHORT-BLADED SCISSORS, APPLIED THEM WITH PASTE--
GUM.
--WITH GUM... ONTO THE PAPER.
BUT WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS WHY THE WORD "MOOR" IS THE ONLY ONE WRITTEN BY HAND...
as You value your life or reason keep away from the MOOR
BECAUSE THE SENDER COULD NOT FIND IT IN PRINT.
THE OTHER WORDS ARE ALL SIMPLE, AND MIGHT BE FOUND IN ANY ISSUE. BUT "MOOR" WOULD BE LESS COMMON.

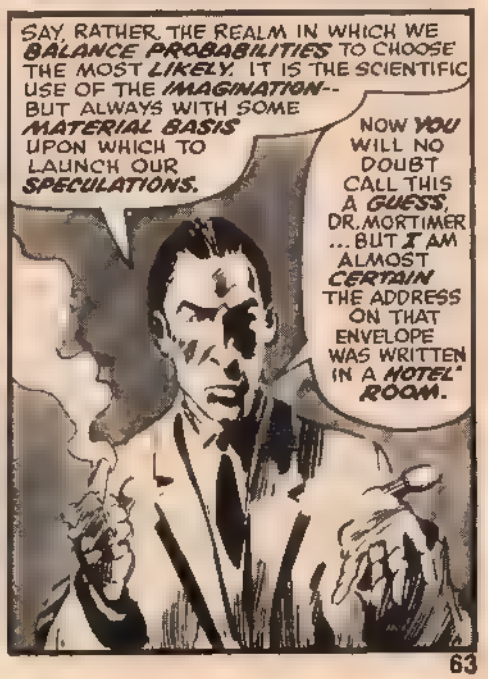
YES, THAT WOULD EXPLAIN IT.
HAVE YOU READ ANYTHING ELSE IN THIS MESSAGE, MR. HOLMES...?

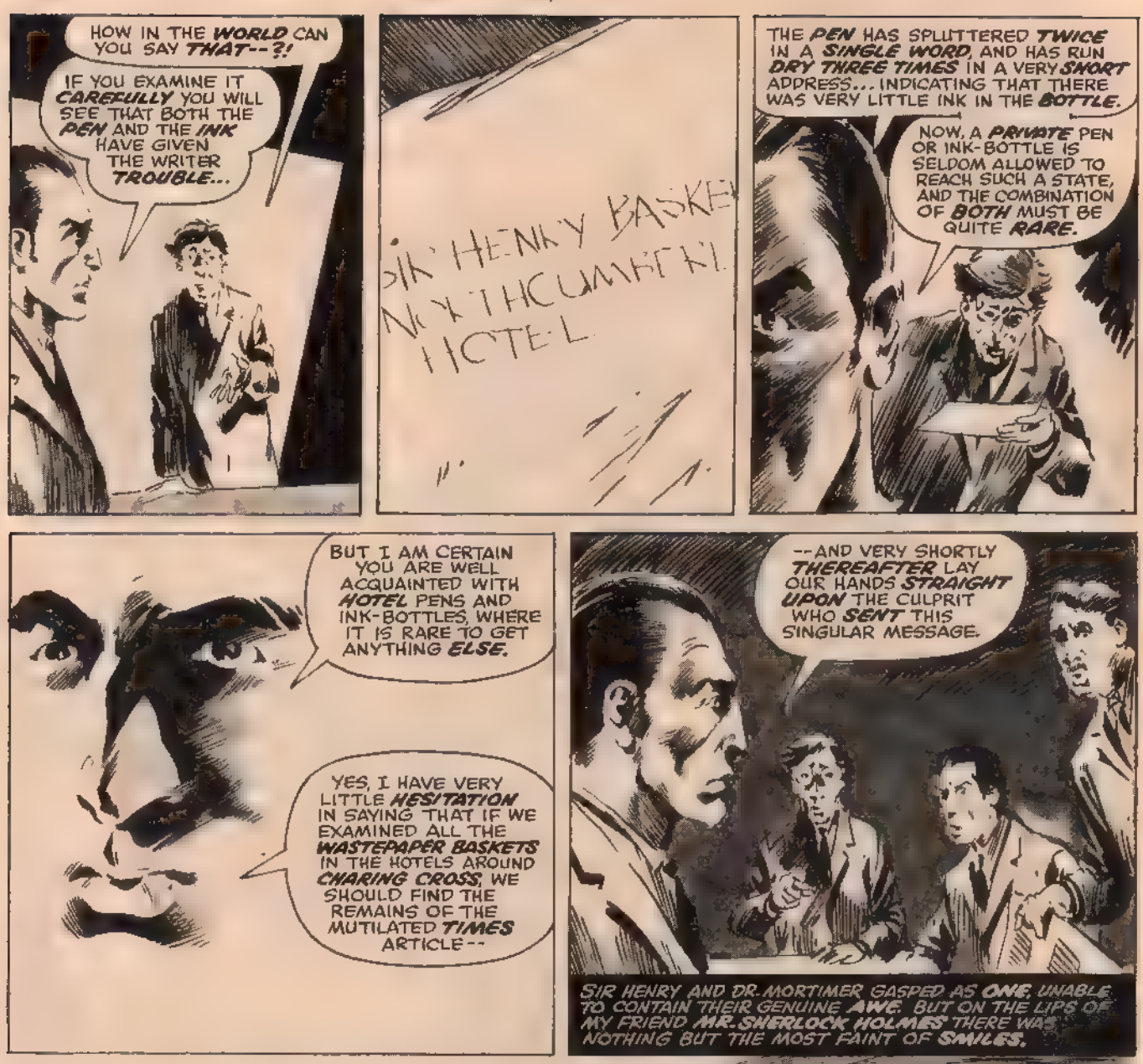
THERE ARE ONE OR TWO INDICATIONS, EVEN THOUGH THE UTMOST PAINS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO REMOVE ALL CLUES.


THE ADDRESS, YOU WILL OBSERVE IS PRINTED BY HAND IN ROUGH CHARACTERS, BUT THE TIMES IS A PAPER WHICH IS SELDOM FOUND IN ANY HANDS BUT THOSE OF THE HIGHLY EDUCATED.
WE MAY ASSUME, THEREFORE THAT THE LETTER WAS COMPOSED BY AN EDUCATED MAN WHO WISHED TO POSE AS AN UNEDUCATED ONE -- AND HIS EFFORT TO CONCEAL HIS HANDWRITING SUGGESTS THAT HE MIGHT BE KNOWN OR COME TO BE KNOWN BY YOU.


AGAIN YOU WILL OBSERVE THAT THE WORDS ARE NOT GUMMED ON IN AN ACCURATE LINE. BUT THAT SOME ARE MUCH HIGHER THAN OTHERS. 'LIFE,' FOR EXAMPLE IS QUITE OUT OF ITS PROPER PLACE.
THIS MAY POINT TO CARELESSNESS, OR TO AGITATION AND HURRY ON THE PART OF THE CUTTER. ON THE WHOLE, I INCLINE TOWARD THE LATTER VIEW, SINCE THE MATTER WAS OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT -- AND WITH NO ROOM FOR CARELESSNESS.
As You
value your
life or
reason
keep away
from the
MOOR

THEREFORE, HE WAS IN A HURRY. BUT WHY? DID THE COMPOSER OF THE MESSAGE FEAR AN INTERRUPTION... AND FROM WHOM?
WE NOW SEEM TO BE ENTERING THE REALM OF GUESS-WORK, MR. HOLMES...


SAY, RATHER, THE REALM IN WHICH WE BALANCE PROBABILITIES TO CHOOSE THE MOST LIKELY. IT IS THE SCIENTIFIC USE OF THE IMAGINATION -- BUT ALWAYS WITH SOME MATERIAL BASIS UPON WHICH TO LAUNCH OUR SPECULATIONS.
NOW YOU WILL NO DOUBT CALL THIS A GUESS, DR. MORTIMER ... BUT I AM ALMOST CERTAIN THE ADDRESS ON THAT ENVELOPE WAS WRITTEN IN A HOTEL ROOM.


HOW IN THE WORLD CAN YOU SAY THAT--?!
IF YOU EXAMINE IT CAREFULLY YOU WILL SEE THAT BOTH THE PEN AND THE INK HAVE GIVEN THE WRITER TROUBLE...
SIR HENRY BASKE
NEXT THE CUMBERN
HOTEL
THE PEN HAS SPLUTTERED TWICE IN A SINGLE WORD, AND HAS RUN DRY THREE TIMES IN A VERY SHORT ADDRESS... INDICATING THAT THERE WAS VERY LITTLE INK IN THE BOTTLE.
NOW, A PRIVATE PEN OR INK-BOTTLE IS SELDOM ALLOWED TO REACH SUCH A STATE, AND THE COMBINATION OF BOTH MUST BE QUITE RARE.
BUT I AM CERTAIN YOU ARE WELL ACQUAINTED WITH HOTEL PENS AND INK-BOTTLES, WHERE IT IS RARE TO GET ANYTHING ELSE.
YES, I HAVE VERY LITTLE HESITATION IN SAYING THAT IF WE EXAMINED ALL THE WASTEPAPER BASKETS IN THE HOTELS AROUND CHARING CROSS, WE SHOULD FIND THE REMAINS OF THE MUTILATED TIMES ARTICLE--
--AND VERY SHORTLY THEREAFTER LAY OUR HANDS STRAIGHT UPON THE CULPRIT WHO SENT THIS SINGULAR MESSAGE.
SIR HENRY AND DR. MORTIMER GASPED AS ONE, UNABLE TO CONTAIN THEIR GENUINE AWE. BUT ON THE LIPS OF MY FRIEND MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES THERE WAS NOTHING BUT THE MOST FAINT OF SMILES.

NEXT ISSUE: The ADVENTURE of The HOUND FROM HELL

PREVIEW REVIEW

Dear Spacemen:

I am totally excited about Marvel Preview #4. Once again I think that Science Fiction has found a true expression in the comic mag medium. Both the feature Star-Lord and the backup Sword in the Star were terrific, and left me crying for more. Star-Lord and Wayfinder were both fantastic. Steve Englehart and Gan, and Bill Mantlo, Ed Hannigan, Craig Russell and Rick Bryant all get my highest praise for faultless scripting and art. Either one of the series has enough strength and potential to carry its own magazine.

Marvel's experimentation with Sci-Fi so far has been limited to short stories and novelettes. I really feel the time has come for a venture into a much longer range series. Archie Goodwin's editorial on "Space Opera" got me thinking about Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction, and although I really like sci-fi short stories the real expression of the sci-fi medium is the novel or novel series. Also I feel the emphasis should be put on original material. There is no denying the success of R.E. Howard's Sword & Sorcery hero Conan to comic form, but he seems to be the exception rather than the rule. I feel Marvel has writers who are gifted enough to be creating classics of their own.

If Star-Lord does get his own mag with Wayfinder as the back-up, it should be at least a bi-monthly production, or monthly as soon as possible, but not quarterly. Bi-monthly is the minimum a mag can come out and still make a long range continuing series coherent and easy to follow. I look forward to the greatness of Star-Lord and the continued success of Marvel Preview.

PMM Rook Jones
Allentown, Penna. 18104

Dear Space Opera-tors:

Strange as it may sound, the best parts of Marvel Preview #4 (Star-Lord) were the background articles by writers Englehart and Mantlo, and the editorial by Archie Goodwin. The back-up feature, *The Sword in the Star* came next in my preference, while the cover feature, *Star-Lord*, was at the bottom of my list.

Why? Very simple. The character of Peter Quill, Star-Lord, is completely unappealing. The plot of the story, the settings, and the little touches (Star Trek inspiring future astronauts) were great. But Peter Quill is not someone I'd care to find out more about.

I think I can see why Steve E. has given that character so many negative characteristics. We would be going along with Peter on a journey of self-discovery, which I guess would be the basis of the rest of a projected Star-Lord series. But, in order to travel with and understand Peter, there has to be at least one or two attractive qualities to make him a sympathetic character. The only vaguely admirable aspect of Peter Quill is the fact that he doesn't panic (e.g., the centrifuge accident). However, even that aspect is played down in that scene in order to build up the idea of Peter's inability to get along with other people.

Now, you might respond by saying that Peter was unable to get along because of the way society treated him. But that's not true at all. Every part of the society Peter belongs to is shown sympathetically—the sheriff isn't cruel when he disbelieves Peter; the orphanage (merely mentioned) is not shown as either positive or negative; the staff, superiors, and the associates at the training center are not shown as being worthy of hate. If the society was meant to be repressive and a main cause of Peter's inability to get along, then we wouldn't know that from the story. It just wasn't shown.

Peter Quill is a maniac, with an obsession from his childhood. Even though his mother was killed by aliens, nothing he does is shown to be justified by his selfish mania. Part of the resolution of the story should have been his realization that his obsession was selfish, which would have been a first step for him to self-discovery. Instead, he's manipulated into believing that the point of his vengeance has been taken care of, that he has killed the aliens. No regrets, no feelings of whether his vengeance was justified—just a sort of an ending to one part of his life, and a beginning to a new one which he starts, it seems, because he has nothing left to do.

I realize that other stories in a Star-Lord series might cover the points I've raised. But still, "First House: Earth" should have been able to stand on its own as a story. It didn't, at least in the way we supposed to believe that Peter will be worthy of becoming a Star-Lord.

Wayfinder, in *The Sword in the Star*, is a much worthier character. Bill Mantlo surprised me, the same way I've been surprised by Thomas, Conway, Gerber and so forth, after reading their atrocious first stories. (Talk about self-growth—every writer at Marvel seems to go through these stages). Wayfinder has his flaws (his arrogance, his traditionalism, his anger) as well as a good side—he's brave, willing to listen to reason, and able to feel deeply without shame. Him I can sympathize with; his saga is one I'd like to see go on. Again, there were those little touches—the jive-talking black wizard, the nickel for the memory machine, Alkinos the steersman-machine. But, in this case, these touches added to a masterful story as they did not add to the tale of a madman trying to be a hero. *The Sword in the Star* was far worthier of the cover position than *Star-Lord*, just as it is far worthier of being continued.

The art, by the way, in both stories, was excellent. I'm a fan of Craig Russell's work, ever since his Ant-Man stories (are the Haamin ships his design?), and Hannigan and Bryant (new artist?) both added to the high quality.

Star-ilty yours,
Glenn Rowsam

And so it went. Some people hated *Starlord*, others loved it. And absolutely no one seemed ambivalent to it...

By the way, Glenn, the Haamin ships, like virtually *everything* in the visuals of *The Sword in the Star*, were Ed Hannigan's design. Craig Russell was inker, but the concepts were already there.

Dear Bullpen:

The introduction of STAR-LORD in Marvel Preview #4, was the beginning of what could be the most exciting character in all of Marveldom, since the Silver Surfer first rode the skyways in the Sixties.

Steve Englehart, has for the last several years been the most inspiring and creative writer that has appeared in all of comics (with the possible exception of Roy Thomas). The man's genius for capturing the human spirit and emotional inter-reactions between characters has made all of his output, for the industry, worthwhile and a welcome change from the sometimes over-pretentious or mundane works of other writers in the field.

In peace and friendship,
Steven A. Chaput
USS WADDELL (DDG-24)
FPO San Francisco 96601

Dear Steve, Steve, and Archie,

Starlord.

A concept that almost was perfect.

This epic was Steve Englehart's best work to date. He completely outshone his recent work on the Avengers, Captain America, and even Captain Marvel. In fact, it resembled more than anything else his earliest work at Marvel, which I had previously considered his best. It was well-written, well-researched, well-structured, and well-thought-out—with a few exceptions as pointed up below.

Starlord represents the epitome of the various heroes you have spent your lives creating. He is the alienated individual carried to the *nth* degree. He is the closest you have ever come (notwithstanding Thor) to Super-God, as Stan Lee called the idea in *Origins of Marvel Comics*. In that respect, he is brilliant. As well, you have given him a past and a present, as well as a possible future. Thus we know what made up Peter Quill, and we know what he will be like in the future.

However, a number of conceptual flaws exist. Why is it that a god—of *any* type—would (a) give his hero a fancy *costume*, complete with helmet; (b) proceed to give him a totally earthly weapon—a *gun*—despite its hokey powers; and (c) allow a *man* to kill off a ship of another type of life? Question (c) has an answer; the revenge Quill accomplished was only in his mind, right? Which means you've got a beautiful moment in a few issues hence when Quill finds the aliens are still alive. But the other two are distinctly comic-book events, that either should have been avoided—or improved upon. Incidentally, you've left us with quite a hook—the God-guy said, "As did you, nine months before your birth!" Does this give us a Christ-allegory? Jeez, I hope not. And now, the biggest question: if we assume the old man is a God-type, would he actually have responded to the question of a murderer (for so Quill is), not to mention a fraud and something of a madman, by saying, "I shall make you a Starlord!"

Is this, then, madness' reward? Is this the honor given to a killer? Despite the fact that he is now the super-hero and focal point of the book that he is, Peter Quill has little to be envied. One can, perhaps, envy his reward. But one cannot envy his disposition, nor his actions. Can we, then, truly expect goodness to choose such a means to work? Do the ends justify the means? Please, Steve, if this strip is to continue on, think of these questions and attempt to resolve them.

Sincerely,
MARK ZUTKOFF
Timonium, Maryland 21093

And so it goes. And the comments and debates are sure to continue. But, in the meantime, send us your comments and criticisms on *Sherlock Holmes*. Don't let us down, hear?

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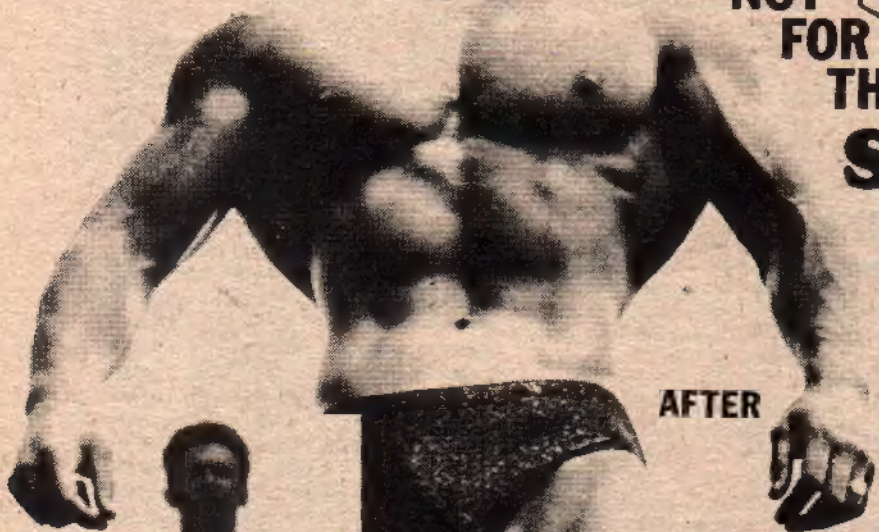

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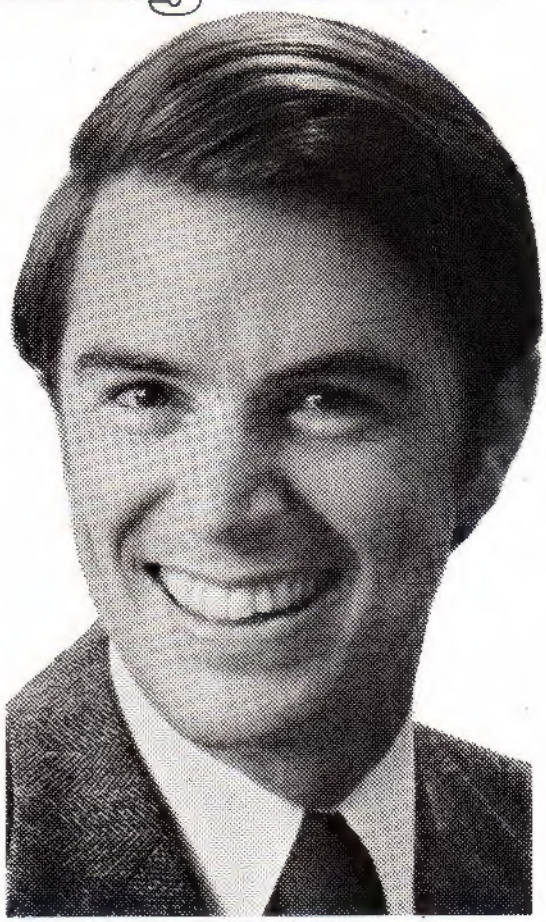

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